

# Gardner-Webb Review

VOLUME V



2004

BOILING SPRINGS, NORTH CAROLINA



# Gardner-Webb Review

VOLUME V

2004

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# AN ANGLO-CENTRIC CHRIST AND AN EGOCENTRIC KING: JESUS THROUGH THE EYES OF KING JAMES VI & I

*JASON BRUNER*

King James took the throne following the Protestant Reformation, which brought serious change to the religious structure of England and Europe. He has become a tremendously important figure for many Christians and historians over the years because of the King James Bible. James developed a unique theology partly because he grew up in such a religiously and politically turbulent environment. His Authorized Version of the Bible made King James one of the most important and influential people in Christendom, even though he did not actually translate the text. This study surveys James' childhood educators as well as his view of kingship, God and Jesus Christ in an effort to determine what King James believed about Jesus Christ and how those views may have affected Anglicanism in England. King James correlated his opinions about his pedagogues, kingship, and theology to create a distinctively egocentric Christology.

King James VI of Scotland had a unique childhood. He did not know his father or mother and he was thrust into the uncertain political atmosphere of 16th Century Scotland when, at the age of 13 months, he ascended to the Scottish throne. His rise to power in 1567 at such a young age was occasioned by the imprisonment in England of his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, for her part in a failed assassination attempt on Queen Elizabeth I of England.<sup>1</sup> However, Elizabeth I later died with no direct heir to her throne, leaving no one but her cousin, King James VI of Scotland, to be her successor. King James VI of Scotland then took the title of King James I of England and inherited control of the Church and State of England in 1603,<sup>2</sup> both being in somewhat precarious states. Claiming divine right to his kingship,

<sup>1</sup> "King James I Biography;" available from [www.jesus-is-lord.com/kingbio.htm](http://www.jesus-is-lord.com/kingbio.htm); Internet; accessed 11/17/03

James tried to appease the English with the “via media,” attempting to ride a middle path in the midst of Protestant extremists and traditional Catholics.<sup>3</sup> James was heavily influenced by Calvinist doctrine and was trained in theology. He desired that people be able to hear and understand the Scriptures in their own language, unlike the Latin of Catholic masses, and this desire was partially the reason he wished for a new English translation of the Bible. The King James Bible is still widely used in Protestant and Catholic Churches, making its four-hundred-year-old message a relevant part of modern Christendom.

The formation of James’ beliefs began with his childhood experiences. One of the most important influences in the life of young James was his childhood education, provided primarily by George Buchanan and Peter Young.<sup>4</sup> From Young, James learned Calvinist theology, for Young himself had recently returned from studying in Geneva under Theodore Beza, a prominent Calvinist scholar of the time.<sup>5</sup> George Buchanan was one of the premiere scholars in Scotland, and he made sure James received a thorough education, although King James later showed that he believed contrary to some of what he was taught, especially regarding the relationship between Church and State and the nature of kingship.<sup>6</sup> However, James later seemed grateful to have received such comprehensive and rigorous training as a child. There is little doubt that as a child, James did not take to Buchanan very well because Buchanan was much older than Peter Young and Buchanan was an extremely strict and driving teacher. The presence of such a strong, largely unsympathetic teacher may have had theological repercussions later in James’ life in his perceived nature of God, for in James’ writings he described God in terms that would be very fitting of James Buchanan, and Jesus in terms that were also used to describe his other teacher, Peter Young.

James inherited from his tutors a “deep aversion for the Catholic Church,”<sup>7</sup> but also a great love for scholarship and theology. Through his teachers he had access to an extensive library from which he read the Classics, Reformation literature, Protestant writings, the Augsburg Confession, and writings from the Swiss and French church-

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Gerald Bray, ed. “The Preface to the Authorized (King James) Version, 1611: Theology” in *Documents of the English Reformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 414.

<sup>4</sup> William McElwee, *The Wisest Fool in Christendom* (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1958), 37.

<sup>5</sup> D. Harris Wilson, *King James VI and I* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1956), 24.

<sup>6</sup> McElwee, 37.

<sup>7</sup> Wilson, 24.

es.<sup>8</sup> He also loved the Bible, making it a practice to have one chapter a day read at the dinner table for discussion during the meal.<sup>9</sup> Even at the age of eight James could read “a chapter of the Bible out of Latin into French and out of French into English [and . . .] few men could have added anything to his translation.”<sup>10</sup>

King James’ energy as a child was concentrated upon study and scholarship, to which he was very adept,

But the supreme consolation for everything he lacked lay in his kingship. The intense self-centeredness which was to become his most dominating characteristic had its root in the importance which everybody else attached to his person and the kingship which it embodied.<sup>11</sup>

James saw God as the One who made him king. God was the source of nearly everything, good and bad.<sup>12</sup> It was James’ belief that God was the Giver of everything that led him to disagree with his tutor Buchanan about the nature of James’ kingship. Buchanan believed that a king’s right to rule came from the people, while James believed that “Kingship was the mysterious quality which made his person so important to everybody; and that was not the doing of the people, but of God.”<sup>13</sup> There was no doubt in James’ mind that none other than God gave him the throne.

James’ childhood was not only filled with studies, but also with turmoil, attacks, threats, and uncertainty. James was taught to expect danger and to trust no one because of the constant presence of turmoil and death during his childhood. The absence of his mother and father no doubt contributed to his sense of insecurity. James’ strong desire for peace has been interpreted as resulting from these childhood events;<sup>14</sup> however, James’ kingship and theology were influenced by far more than his tumultuous youth.

It seems that his harsh, rigorous, and demanding schoolmaster, Buchanan, shaped James’ view of God to a large degree. King James later wrote, in his Meditation on the Lord’s Prayer, about approaching God through prayer, saying, “The words ‘Our Father’ denote reverence, infinite love, and greatness, contrasting with the

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>10</sup> McElwee, 39.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> McElwee, 37.

practice of the Puritans who talk with God as with their equal and ‘who love to sit Jack-fellowlike with Christ at the Lord’s Table.’”<sup>15</sup> His words here imply that he was able to see the love and greatness of God, but was very cautious about being too friendly with him. James later warned his son against the Scottish clergy because they were “too familiar” with God or against being overly friendly “like the vain proud Puritans that think they rule Him upon their fingers.”<sup>16</sup> God was someone who commanded respect and honor, not someone to be taken lightly. James also wrote, “But in your praier to God, speak with al reverence, for if a subject wil not speak but reverently to a king, much les should any flesh presume to crak with God as with his companion.”<sup>17</sup> God was the King, someone to be respected above all others, seemingly to the point that God should be held at a distance. James seems to have viewed God in much the same way he saw Buchanan: present and active in his life, but at a respectful and honored distance.

James also prided himself on his theology, which he could defend well with proof-texts and scholarship. During his reign he embodied the “via media,” or middle way, by theologically positioning himself between the Roman Catholic and Puritan positions.<sup>18</sup> This approach also influenced the translation style of the King James Bible. As Bray noted,

The theology of the Authorized Version represents Anglicanism at its moderate best. It is neither Papist nor Puritan, but seeks to represent the classic ‘via media’ . . . [T]he best witness to its relative objectivity is the fact that all English-speaking Christians, even Roman Catholics, eventually came under its sway and used it to support very different theological and ecclesiological positions.<sup>19</sup>

This also shows how James wanted to maintain peace, trying to appease two contrasting religious groups with his “middle way” theology.

In James’ perception of the nature of God, he accepted seemingly contrasting beliefs of God. The statements “God knoweth all things, being always good”<sup>20</sup> and “God hath before all beginnings

<sup>15</sup> Wilson, 402.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 200.

<sup>17</sup> King James VI & I, *Basilicon Doron* (1599); available from [www.jesus-is-lord.com/basilic.htm](http://www.jesus-is-lord.com/basilic.htm); Internet; accessed 10/27/03.

<sup>18</sup> Bray, 414.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

preordained as well the particular sortes of Plagues as of benefites for every man”<sup>21</sup> show James’ belief that God was giver both of what was good and the Source of what seemed to be bad. This is not to say that King James believed God to be malicious or evil, for although God allows “Plagues” to come,

assure your selfe God fore-seeth that which ye aske is not for your weal: and learne in time so to enterprete all the adversities that God shall send unto you, so shall ye in the midst of them not aonly be armed with patience, but joyfully lift up your eyes from the present trouble, to the happie end that God will turn it to[ . . . ] ye will find God sent it for your weill.<sup>22</sup>

God is one who sends Plagues and adversities but also is good and works those things out for the good will of men. God has supreme knowledge, which is above human knowledge, knowing better what is good for mankind; in this regard, God should also be revered and held with honor and dignity.

James saw God as one who was very active in humanity, particularly in Christian states such as England. James was egocentric in his beliefs, assuming God’s favor and support in all political affairs. His poem “Lepanto,” for example, depicts Christian Europe’s naval victory against the Turks in 1571 as “God” defeating “Satan.”<sup>23</sup> James’ egocentricity also carried over to the doctrinal debates between Protestants and Catholics. Just as God weighed the Christians and Turks on His scale in heaven and found the Turks to be lacking, so God would likewise judge between the Protestants and Catholics. In James’ view, God would undoubtedly side with the Protestants.<sup>24</sup> The English defeat of the Spanish Armada was another example of divine intervention in earthly political affairs. Just as God had delivered David and Israel from the Philistines, God had defeated the nations that “had banded against the Lord, but He had hurled them to destruction beneath the waves.”<sup>25</sup> God was always on James’ side, and James did not hesitate to identify England as “the Lord” in the quote above, furthering the parallel between God’s deliverance of David and England’s deliverance from the Spanish.

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<sup>20</sup> King James VI & I, *Daemonologie* (1598); available from [www.jesus-is-lord.com/kjdaemon.htm](http://www.jesus-is-lord.com/kjdaemon.htm); Internet; accessed 10/27/03.

<sup>21</sup> King James VI & I, *The Seconde Booke of Daemonologie* (1598); available from [www.jesus-is-lord.com/kjdaemon.htm](http://www.jesus-is-lord.com/kjdaemon.htm); Internet; accessed 10/27/03.

<sup>22</sup> King James VI & I, *Basilicon Doron* (1599).

<sup>23</sup> Wilson, 65.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 65-66.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 83-84.

James identified in himself qualities evident in the great men of biblical faith. Like King David, James wrote poetry; like Solomon, James wrote wisdom literature in his *Basilicon Doron*; like Paul, James wrote to help guide and encourage the church at large as in his *Meditation on the Lord's Prayer and Daemonologie*.<sup>26</sup> Like the early church fathers, James saw himself as the defender of the faith against heresies, like those of the Dutch Arminians.<sup>27</sup> James believed that just as David carried the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem after the defeat of the Philistines, so James needed to carry the “Ark of Christ,” which he believed to be the New Testament, into his present generation.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, one of the defining qualities King James saw in himself that placed him directly in the “spiritual lineage” of the great kings of faith was his love for peace and hate for violence. In commenting about his peaceful nature:

‘I know not,’ he wrote, ‘by what fortune the dicton of Pacificus was added to my title at my coming to England, that of the lion, expressing true fortitude, having been my dicton before. But I am not ashamed of this addition. For King Solomon was a figure of Christ in that he was a king of peace. The greatest gift that our Saviour gave his apostles immediately before His ascension was that he left His peace with them.’<sup>29</sup>

James saw himself in the line of Solomon and Jesus because he loved peace, and it is probable that he thought himself, in part, as the peace that Christ left on earth.

James believed that the Anglican Church was the true descendant of the primitive Christian Church, and just as Christ was the head of the “true” Church on earth, James firmly believed that he was the God-ordained head of the Anglican Church.<sup>30</sup> This idea sets up an interesting parallel between James and Jesus Christ, making them both “heads” of the “true church,” although in slightly different contexts – Jesus as the King of the whole Church, while James saw himself as the king of the true Church of England. James believed “that it is one of the principall parts of that duetie which appertaines unto a Christian King, to protect the trew church within his own dominions.”<sup>31</sup> Just as Christ had protected and guided the true Church in the first century, so

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<sup>26</sup> Wilson, 63.

<sup>27</sup> Wilson, 63.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>30</sup> Wilson, 198.



James would guide and protect the descendent of that tradition found in the Anglican Church.

James believed “in One Kingdom, comprising both Church and State, over which he ruled as God’s viceregent.”<sup>32</sup> This responsibility was not taken lightly, for God was the one who was the giver of all things; God puts kings on thrones and those kings must keep a holy life to rule effectively.<sup>33</sup> James’ view of kingship is very closely tied to the ideas of kingship in the Old Testament. It is God’s will, according to James, that the people obey the king and, since kingship was begun by God, God is the only one who can take it away.<sup>34</sup> As Wilson puts it, “Evil kings as well as good kings come from God, and men may not remove the curse that God has placed on them.”<sup>35</sup> So staunch was James’ belief that his authority came from God that one of the primary reasons he hated the Geneva Bible was not because of the translation itself, but because of its footnotes, which spoke against the “divine right of kings.”<sup>36</sup>

James believed his kingship was important because God was the one who placed him on the throne to defend the established faith of England. Just as God had established the throne for the Israelites in the Old Testament, God also established the throne in England,<sup>37</sup> and James was God’s anointed who sat upon it,<sup>38</sup> representing God’s power to defend His people. As God’s “anointed” king, James saw himself as the representation of God’s authority on earth and God had given him the authority, for God was the giver of all things. He expressed his feelings on the divine right of kings in the introduction to *Basilicon Doron*:

*God gives not Kings the style of Gods in vain,  
For on his throne his Sceptre do they sway;  
And as their subjects ought them to obey,  
So Kings should fear and serve their God again.*<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> W.K. Jordan, *Development of Religious Toleration in England* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1965), 32.

<sup>32</sup> Donaldson, Gordon, “The Scottish Church 1567-1625,” in *Reign of King James VI and I*, ed. Alan G. R. Smith (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1973), 54.

<sup>33</sup> King James VI & I, *Basilicon Doron* (1599).

<sup>34</sup> Wilson, 131.

<sup>35</sup> Wilson, 132.

<sup>36</sup> Alister McGrath, *In The Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 141.

<sup>37</sup> Jordan, 30.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

Although James believed he was put in England by God in part to protect its religion, he firmly believed in doing so with as little bloodshed as possible, for “God never loves to plant His Church by violence and bloodshed.”<sup>40</sup> Similarly he said about himself, “I am a King who loves peace. I do not delight in shedding blood and therefore I strain every nerve to avert it if possible.”<sup>41</sup> But to James God did not remain completely passive and peaceful, “for why may not God use anie kind of extraordinarie punishment, when it pleases him; as well as the ordinarie roddes of sicknesse and other adversities.”<sup>42</sup> This same nature is evident in James because although he was a pacific king, he did believe he was justified in the sight of God to fight over some things – “I swear to you, that if any one should give you disturbance in your churches, upon your application to me, I will revenge your cause.”<sup>43</sup> Therefore, James saw the same attributes in himself that he saw in God. James was the defender of the true Church, the king who sat on the throne to protect his people. James felt he had the right to take up the cause of religious persecution with violence because he was set on the throne of England by God to protect the Church, for God defended His people with violence in the Old Testament as well.

James had a strong sense of a spiritual battle that was constantly warring, and it was imperative that he expressed the importance of faith in God to overcome the struggle. In his reflection on the phrase “lead us not into temptation” from the Lord’s Prayer, James wrote:

The Greek hath it . . . ‘from the evil one;’ and these words put us in mind what need we have of continual prayer to God, to be preserved from that old traitorous and restless enemy.<sup>44</sup>

He further explains the necessity for faith in God in his work, *Daemonologie*,

No doubt, for there are three kinde of folks whom God will permit so to be tempted or troubled; the wicked for their hor-

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<sup>39</sup> King James VI & I, *Basilicon Doron*, in *In The Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture*, Alister McGrath (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 141.

<sup>40</sup> Jordan, 33.

<sup>41</sup> Wilson, 419.

<sup>42</sup> King James VI & I, *The Second Booke of Daemonologie* (1598).

<sup>43</sup> Jordan, 33.

<sup>44</sup> King James VI and I, *Meditation on the Lord’s Prayer* (1619) in Lerner, Christina, “James VI and I and Witchcraft,” in *The Reign of James VI and I*, Alan G.R. Smith, ed. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1973), 89.

rible sinnes, to punish them in the like measure; the godlie that are sleeping in anie great sinnes or infirmities and weaknesse in faith, to waken them up the faster by such an uncouth forme: and even some of the best, that their patience may bee tryed before the world, as Jobs was. For whymay not God use anie kind of extraordinarie punishment, when it pleases him; as well as the ordinarie roddes of sicknesse and other adversities.<sup>45</sup>

God's protection from these struggles is necessary in the eyes of King James, and he believed that God's protection came through the Scriptures, which were of utmost importance and interest to James: "The whole Scripture is dited by God's Spirit, thereby (as by his lively word) to instruct and rule the whole Christian militant, till the end of the world."<sup>46</sup> Faith in God was essential to being protected in the world from evil, for God works things out for good. God is the Protector, but firm faith is needed because James believed that God does not defend the hesitant.<sup>47</sup>

James had a great respect for the Scriptures and God revealed in them. He advised,

. . . preasse not curioslie to seek out farther nor is contayned therein; for that were misnurtured presumption, to strive to farther upon Gods secrets nor he hath will ye be for what he thought needful for us to know, that hee hath revealed there.<sup>48</sup>

It seemed that God was not One who was completely knowable, yet One who was always at work in Creation, as James saw the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the Turks as signs that God was with Christian England. However, James desired to continue seeking after God and believed that a king "must attain to a knowledge and fear of God by study of the Scriptures, by prayer, by preservation of a sensitive conscience."<sup>49</sup> James seemed to respect and fear God, possibly having the same attitude towards his King that he wanted his subjects to have toward their king. God was to be completely respected; James believed that the reason God was pictured as sitting on his throne in the Bible is because it is a posture of judgment and other postures imply a lack of focus, such as walking, or weariness, such as leaning.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> King James VI & I, *The Second Book of Daemonologie* (1597).

<sup>46</sup> King James VI & I, *Basilicon Doron* (1599).

<sup>47</sup> Wilson, 105.

<sup>48</sup> King James VI & I, *Basilicon Doron* (1599).

<sup>49</sup> Wilson, 134.

God is the one who gives the gift of faith; faith is “the golden chaine that linketh the faithful soule to Christ [. . .] it is a free gift of God.”<sup>51</sup> Faith in God links the believer to “Christ, who pardoning sin containeth Grace.”<sup>52</sup> Grace is found in the life of Jesus Christ and is needed for salvation.

But because no man was able to keep the Lawe, nor anie part thereof, it pleased God of his infinite wisdom and goodness, to incarnate his onelie Sonne in our nature, for satisfaction of his justice in his suffering for us: that since we could not bee saved by doing, wee might (at least) be saved by believing. The ground therefore of the Lawe of Grace, is contained in the foure histories of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ.<sup>53</sup>

Jesus was needed for James because no one is sinless, and the sacrifice of Jesus provided the way that fallen men might be saved by believing in the grace found in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God was also the one who sent Jesus, his son, to earth to be the means of grace for humanity. Although King James viewed God at a respectable distance, as one might view an earthly king, he saw Jesus in somewhat different terms, someone with whom he could closely identify.

In his work, *A Paterne for a Kings Inauguration* (1620), King James showed how Christ, in Matthew 27:27-29, was coroneted the true King of Kings:

I lighted upon that part, where the Governors soldiers mocked our Saviour, with putting the ornaments of a King upon him. Which appeared to me to be so punctually set down, that my head hammered upon it divers times after, and specifically the crown of thornes went never out of my mind, remembering the thorny cares, which a King (if he have a care of his office) must be subject unto, as (God knows) I daily and nightly feele in mine owne person.<sup>54</sup>

It is apparent from this excerpt that James saw Jesus as his Saviour.

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<sup>50</sup> King James VI & I, *A Paterne for a Kings Inauguration*; available from [www.jesus-is-lord.com/kjinaug.htm](http://www.jesus-is-lord.com/kjinaug.htm); Internet; accessed 10/24/03.

<sup>51</sup> King James VI & I, *Basilicon Doron* (1599).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> King James VI & I, “The Epistle Dedicatorie” in *A Paterne for a King Inauguration*; available from [www.jesus-is-lord.com/kjinaug.htm](http://www.jesus-is-lord.com/kjinaug.htm); Internet; accessed 10/24/03.

Even though these verses depict the graphic nature of the persecution and death of Jesus, James saw a way to metaphorically relate to the suffering King. Jesus was someone with whom James could relate, someone in whom he could find comfort because James identified with the pressures of kingship that he saw Jesus experiencing in his last days. James' perspective of Jesus here contrasts with how he viewed God the Father. Although James believed Jesus was God, "For hee thought it no robbetrie to bee equal with God,"<sup>55</sup> he seemed to apply very different attributes to the same deity. For example, God was seen as someone to be respected, revered, and somewhat unapproachable, while Jesus came and suffered, which is a very human experience that is worthy of respect, however, not a respect that stands at a distance. He could identify with Jesus because they were both kings who came under the pressures and struggles of ruling a kingdom. God did not appear to be someone with whom James could identify, even though he believed God to be King, for God seemed to be held at a distance, whereas Jesus fought for his kingdom in a way that James identified with from his own experiences.

James saw God as the Supreme King over Creation, and the Kingship of God is one to be respected, as was stated previously. God's kingship was seen differently from the kingship of Jesus in that James took the kingship of Jesus as an example, but God was seen as One deserving complete respect and honor, as a subject would view their earthly king. In the New Testament, James also sees Jesus as a king, but James speaks of Jesus differently than he does of God the Father. An interesting relationship can be drawn here because just as Buchanan displayed many of the qualities James saw in God, likewise Jesus, to James, displays many of the qualities James found in his other teacher, Peter Young. Whereas Buchanan was strict, impersonal, and demanding, Young was able to relate more personally with James, being much more sympathetic and compassionate. Buchanan was "not a great pedagogue,"<sup>56</sup> being "gouty, crabbed, ill tempered,"<sup>57</sup> but Young was "gentle and loveable . . . and must have added a note of humanity to James's upbringing."<sup>58</sup> The parallel could be explained by saying Young was someone that James took as an example, while Buchanan was someone that James held at a respectful distance. In God, King James saw One who gave him authority, was King of all things, anointed the kings of Israel in the Old Testament, and should be honored and treated as a subject would treat an earthly king. In Jesus,

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<sup>55</sup> King James VI & I, *A Paterne for a Kings Inauguration*.

<sup>56</sup> McElwee, 37.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

James saw a king as well, but in a different light with which he viewed God, for Jesus was a king to be identified with, a king of compassion, sympathy, and one who led by example, much like the way he saw Peter Young.

The idea of Jesus being an example was tremendously important to King James, for he wrote to his son, "Whom can a paterne for a Kings Inauguration so well fit as a Kings sonne and here, being written by the King his Father, and the paterne taken from the King of all Kings?"<sup>59</sup> Because James was a king, he saw Jesus as his ultimate example, for he was the "King of all Kings," and, unlike the judgmental God that James pictured, Jesus was the incarnate son of God on earth, living out his kingship of Grace in the flesh.

Jesus' "sonship" to God the Father meant that he had divinity and equality with God because Jesus "thought it no robberie to bee equal with God."<sup>60</sup> While Jesus was on earth, "hee was both God and Man [. . .] he ever intermitted glances of his glory, in the midst of his greatest humilitie."<sup>61</sup> To James, Jesus was God incarnate, he was equal with God, and he was completely God and Man.

At this point in Jesus' story, James seems to be in awe of the concept of God's not only becoming man, but also of God's willingness to suffer, be condemned, and die. He sees the soldiers' actions in Matthew 27 as a divine coronation service in which the soldiers did not know the full implications of their actions. However, James drew immense significance from these passages about the nature of Christ and His purpose in the world. When the soldiers mockingly put the scarlet robes on Jesus, James saw it in a metaphorical light of Christ's true purpose because

the robes of his flesh were dyed in that true purple and scarlet dye of his bloud, whose bloud must wash our sinnes, that wee may appeare holy and unspotted before him in our white robes, washed in the bloud of the Lambe.<sup>62</sup>

Therefore, Christ is the sacrificial Lamb of God, who came to die so that through his blood we might achieve forgiveness of our sins; Christ is the way to be holy.

At Jesus' "coronation" there was no sword, an item that is commonly used in the coronation ceremony of kings. James explains,

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<sup>59</sup> King James VI & I, "The Epistle Dedicatorie" in *A Paterne for a Kings Inauguration*.

<sup>60</sup> King James VI & I, *A Paterne for a Kings Inauguration*.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> King James VI & I, *A Paterne for a Kings Inauguration*.

“The reason is, his first coming was to suffer for our salvation from the sword of divine injustice; and not to use the sword, to take vengeance upon evil doers; at his second coming he will come as a judge, and use his sword upon the wicked.”<sup>63</sup> Jesus is the “true King of mercy.”<sup>64</sup> James prided himself on being a peaceful king, not failing to point out several times that the great king Solomon was a king of peace as well. Jesus was crowned in peace; he did not force his kingdom through violence, and James, too, did not want his kingdom forced necessarily through violence. James believed himself to be godly, for God had favored him enough to give him the throne. Jesus came as a Saviour, to bring salvation and mercy, allowing those who have faith in him to escape the wrath of God that will be unleashed when Jesus comes back to earth in the future as a judge of the earth, then bringing his sword to take vengeance.

Ultimately, however, James I wrote a concise confession of who Jesus was to him:

For the true understanding whereof, two things are to be respected and had in consideration, the Person and the Paterne: the qualities of the Person to bee applied to our comfort and salvation, the Paterne for our imitation or example. The Person was our Saviour Jesus Christ, who was humbled for our exaltation, tortured for our comfort, despised for our glory, and suffered for our salvation.<sup>65</sup>

The most interesting aspect of the character of Jesus that James sees in the trial of Jesus is that God brought glory to Himself through the soldiers even without their knowing it.<sup>66</sup> James wrote, “God inforced their bodies” and “It pleased therefore the Almighty to make those soldiers worship Christ in their bodies” (*italics mine*).<sup>67</sup> This says that God controls the bodies of people in order to bring glory to himself, even if those people are not aware of God’s action or presence in the situation. James believes that this is a part of the character of God, to bring something good out of something bad, “for it is ordinarie with God to bring light out of darkness, as hee did at the Creation.”<sup>68</sup> Christ “is the Creator and Redeemer,” one who creates light out of darkness, and one who uses even evil people to bring glory to himself.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> King James VI & I, *A Paterne for a Kings Inauguration*.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

To James, Jesus was present in the Creation, for he was the Creator, and he would be present in the end times, finally bringing his sword to bring vengeance on those who do not believe, and reign as King in peace.

Consequently, King James became very interested in the Book of Revelation, and an interpretation of the Revelation that became popular in the 16th Century was that the Roman Catholic Church or the Papacy was the Anti-Christ of the end times. As James read the Book of Revelation, he believed that the imprisonment of Satan discussed in the book represented the flourishing of the Christian Church in the first centuries.<sup>69</sup> Then the Anti-Christ was released, signified by “the pale horse, king of locusts, by the beast rising from the sea, and by the woman in scarlet sitting on the waters”<sup>70</sup> in the Book of Revelation. The Anti-Christ that came into the world was the Pope and his Catholic Church, and James warned that the Anti-Christ is always trying to attack Europe so they should always be ready to fight.<sup>71</sup> This conflict closely resembles the conflict between Christian Europe (God) and the Turks (Satan) that was discussed earlier in James’ poem, “Lepanto.” James believed that “Satan’s instruments” and “Satan and his congregation” were not witches (whom James believed to be committing the greatest sin possible by living in complete opposition to God ),<sup>72</sup> but instead are the Roman Catholics.<sup>73</sup> Other agents of the devil were the Turks, Princes of the earth, and the Spaniards.<sup>74</sup> This is why James esteemed the English victory over the Spanish Armada so highly because Spain was not only a Catholic state, making it not a part of the true Church of Anglicanism, but was also seen as one of Satan’s agents. These people were in complete opposition to God, God’s purpose, Jesus’ redemptive plan for the world, and the spread of the Church, of which James saw himself the leader.

James believed Jesus Christ to be the head of the “true Church,” the Church he established while he was on earth. The early, “true” Church flourished because Satan, according to James I, was bound. In summation, the early Church was the true Church because it had Jesus, the true King of Peace from the line of David, as its head. However, the Anti-Christ, which is the Pope and Roman Catholic Church, entered the world, and the true Church has been squelched because of the Anti-Christ’s influence.

<sup>69</sup> Wilson, 82.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 105.

<sup>73</sup> Larner, 79.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.



According to James I, the Anglican Church was made in the same spirit and pattern as the primitive Christian Church of the first centuries. He believed himself to be the God-placed king in command of the Church and State of England, making him the head of the Anglican Church. James saw himself as the true king of England, placed there by divine right, over the “true” (Anglican) Church and a king of peace, cut from the line of David and Solomon. As a result, James saw himself as the king of peace, head of the true Church, engulfed in a desperate battle with the Anti-Christ.

Through the eyes of King James I of England, Jesus was the Son of God, God incarnate, ultimate Grace, Mercy, completely Man and completely God, and the one who suffered for our sins so that we could be saved from the judgment of God. Believers are linked to Jesus through faith in him, for he created everything and he is the Redeemer. James saw someone greater than he in Jesus, but Jesus was also humbled so that James might be able to relate with Christ in James’ own struggles as king. Jesus will come back with the sword of vengeance to establish a kingdom that he will reign over in peace. Therefore, to James I, Jesus was the King of Kings, the ultimate example for an earthly king. He was active in the world, always weighing in on James’ side of the fight, for God would enact justice on those who opposed His side, the side of James and England. The egocentric Christ and God of James I worked to His glory, and to James that meant working through him and the Anglican Church. In the context of 17th Century England, James I saw himself as the King of Peace, the head of the true Church, which battled the Anti-Christ. Thus in effect, to himself, James was – Jesus.

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# “ARISE, MY LOVE, MY FAIR ONE, AND COME AWAY”: THE ROLE OF THE SONG OF SONGS IN SEEKING AND DESCRIBING ENCOUNTERS WITH GOD AS THE DIVINE LOVER IN THE MIDDLE AGES

*MATTHEW CONNOR SULLIVAN*

During the Middle Ages, there was a tendency for Christians, at first the monks and anchorites but increasingly lay Christians as well, to see God or some part of the Godhead as the Divine Lover. Reading the tender call found in the Song of Songs, “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away” (2:10 NRSV), believers heard their God calling them into a deeper spiritual experience that ultimately led to an eternal marriage in heaven. In fact, the Song of Songs was one of the most popular books of the Middle Ages precisely because of the images of passionate, and sometimes erotic, love, which were interpreted allegorically as speaking of the intense love relationship between God and the believer. Although the roots of this type of interpretation lay in rabbinical Judaism and were not necessarily Christian inventions, the ways in which Christians sought to answer the call to “come away” (hereafter referred to as “the Call”) and described their experiences were unique nonetheless. Before discussing some of these ways, however, it may be helpful to examine briefly the earliest history of the Christian understanding of the Song of Songs.

The origins of the book of Song of Songs (or Song of Solomon) are enigmatic. Scholars are unsure how and when to date the work, perhaps, as Mona West points out, due to the “timeless nature of love poetry.”<sup>1</sup> While some scholars, such as Weston W. Fields, are convinced that the book can be dated as early as the third or fourth century B.C.E.,<sup>2</sup> Carl W. Ernst notes that “From a strictly liter-

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<sup>1</sup> Mona West, “Song of Solomon,” *Mercer Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Watson E. Mills and Richard F. Wilson (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1995), 559.

ary and historical perspective, scholars agree that the Song of Songs probably dates to around the first century C.E., though it may contain material that is much older."<sup>3</sup> In any case, it was during the first century that book was included within the Jewish canon, although not without a degree of hesitancy on the part of some. One of the difficulties that may have led many to question whether it belonged with other scriptures was that the Song of Songs was being sung in taverns in first-century Palestine.<sup>4</sup> Other difficulties include the fact it never mentions God, contains no real theology, contains no preaching or prophecies, and is devoted to the love between man and woman, focusing primarily on the woman's perspective.<sup>5</sup> In the second century, perhaps responding to ongoing concerns over the book, Rabbi Akiva (sometimes seen as Akiba) stated, "All the world is not worth the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel, for all the Writings are holy, but the Song of Songs is the Holy of Holies."<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, the book was eventually grouped by Jewish leaders with other books that were only to be read by those over forty, "lest passion and youth overwhelm wisdom."<sup>7</sup> Akiva went on to condemn those who sang it in taverns or banquet halls,<sup>8</sup> warning "that 'any one who would dare treat this book as a secular love poem forfeits his share in the World to Come'" since doing so could "jeopardize the welfare of all mankind."<sup>9</sup> Thus, as Ernst points out, "The dilemma of secular or spiritual interpretation of this love song is thus present at its very beginning."<sup>10</sup>

Although Weston W. Fields argues that the Song of Songs was not originally interpreted allegorically by Jewish writers,<sup>11</sup> Carl W. Ernst notes that "for most of its history, the Song of Songs has been the subject of allegorical interpretation."<sup>12</sup> Thus, Jewish writers began seeing the Song of Songs as referring to the relationship between Israel

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<sup>2</sup> Weston W. Fields, "Early and Medieval Jewish Interpretation of the Song of Songs," in *Grace Theological Journal* vol. 1, no. 2 (1980), 224.

<sup>3</sup> Carl W. Ernst, "Interpreting the Song of Songs: The Paradox of Spiritual and Sensual Love," taken 8 October 2003 from <<http://www.unc.edu/~cernst/articles/sosintro.htm>>, 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 3; see also West, 559.

<sup>6</sup> Ernst, 3; Fields, 227, identifies this quote as coming from Mishnah, Yadaim 3:5.

<sup>7</sup> Ernst, 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>9</sup> Fields, 229. The references to Akiva's warnings come from *Tosefta Sanhedrin 12, 10, and 101a*.

<sup>10</sup> Ernst, 3.

<sup>11</sup> Fields, 222, 231.

and God. In one such allegorical interpretation, foreign nations are attempting to entice Israel to leave their God and “mingle” with them,

‘But the Israelites reply, “Do you know Him: We will tell you a portion of His renown; my beloved is white and ruddy; the chiefest among ten thousand” [Song 5:10]. When they [the nations] hear Israel praise Him thus, they say to the Israelites, “We will go with you,” as it is said, “Whither has your beloved turned him that we may seek him with you?” [Song 6:1]. But the Israelites say, “You have no part or lot in Him,” as it is said, “My beloved is mine, and I am His” [Song 2:16].’<sup>13</sup>

Regarding the way in which they interpreted the Song of Songs, Ernst writes,

One of the chief Jewish approaches to the Song of Songs was to see it as an allegory for the loving relationship of God to Israel, in which God was the lover and the people of Israel were the bride. The intensity and passion of the Song of Songs conveyed, in the view of many, the ultimate importance of the relationship of the Jewish people and their God.<sup>14</sup>

Two images that Jewish writers invoked from the Song of Songs 1:2 were the Torah as wine<sup>15</sup> and that God’s communing with the people “face to face,” so to speak, through the giving of the Law and oral tradition, was seen as the “kisses of his mouth.”<sup>16</sup>

It is unknown whether or not, or to what degree, early Christians shared the Jewish concerns over the Song of Songs. The book does not play a role in any of the New Testament or other early Christian writings. As Christians began making attempts to “adopt” and allegorize the Hebrew Scriptures as their own over the course of the second century, however, the Song of Songs became a text open to Christian interpretation. Bernard McGinn writes,

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<sup>12</sup> Ernst, 4.

<sup>13</sup> Fields, 228. The references “is found in Mekilta (Exodus), *Shirata*, Beshallah,” pericope 3.

<sup>14</sup> Ernst, 4; see also Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism: Origins of the Fifth Century*, vol. 1 of *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 21.

<sup>15</sup> Fields, 229.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 230.

We may speculate that the Song took on new importance for both Christians and Jews in the course of the second century C.E. as both groups sought to vindicate why this erotic poem was a part, indeed a central part, of the divine message to humanity.<sup>17</sup>

The first surviving example of Christian interpretation does not appear, however, until the third century with Origen, who wrote three Greek commentaries on the Song of Songs, one of which was ten volumes (20,000 lines) alone!<sup>18</sup> McGinn argues that Origen was aware of and influenced by the rabbinical concept of the Bride as being Israel. "In short," writes McGinn, "Origen knew Jewish corporate or communal interpretations of the Song and used them selectively for his own purposes, but his properly mystical reading still seems to be his own creation."<sup>19</sup> It can be easily seen how Origen, aware of the Jewish interpretation of the Song of Songs as speaking of the relationship between God and Israel, would simply replace Israel with the Church in order to arrive at his ecclesial understanding of the Song of Songs. After all, Christian writers had been arguing that the Church had replaced Israel as the people of God for almost one hundred years. One of Origen's contributions to the Christian interpretation, and thus to the spirituality of the Middle Ages, was his understanding of the Song of Songs as pertaining to individual believers as well as the entire Church.<sup>20</sup> Up until the twelfth century, however, the ecclesial reading would dominate the interpretation of the Song of Songs, after which writers opted increasingly for the personal interpretation.<sup>21</sup> But it is beginning with Origen in the third century that "the language of the Song becomes the best way to read the inner text of the soul."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> McGinn, *Foundations*, 20.

<sup>18</sup> Ernst, 4.

<sup>19</sup> McGinn, *Foundations*, 21. For an argument of the opposite view, that the Christian allegorical interpretation influenced the Jewish one, see Fields, 221-222, 228.

<sup>20</sup> McGinn, *Foundations*. "In and through the Word's love for the church the Divine Lover comes to meet the individual soul - the mystical interpretation of the Song of Songs presupposes the ecclesial one or, better, is another dimension of it."

<sup>21</sup> McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism: Gregory the Great through the 12th Century*, vol. 2 of *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 178. McGinn identifies Bernard of Clairvaux as instrumental in "melding the ecclesiological and the personal reading of the Song after many centuries in which a largely church-related meaning had predominated."

<sup>22</sup> McGinn, *Foundations*, 121.

Understanding that an allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs has been present within Christianity since at least the third century, we now turn to examining how medieval Christians sought to answer the Call. About a century after Origen provided the first Christian interpretation of the Song of Songs, some Christians began looking for ways to live more devoted, sacrificial lives in the pursuit of God. Thus, monasticism was born.<sup>23</sup> This does not necessarily mean that it was the call to rise and “come away” in Song of Songs 2:10 that caused them to abandon the world in the pursuit of God. Perhaps they were responding to Jesus’ challenge in the Gospels to “pick up [their] crosses” and follow him (Mark 8:34; Matt 16:24; 10:38-39; Luke 9:23; 14:27). But as Christians began viewing their relationship with God, both corporate and personal, as the love relationship found in the Song of Songs, the idea of abandoning the world to follow God became inextricably linked to the call, “Arise, my love, and come away.” Therefore, the first and most obvious way in which individuals sought to answer the Call during the Middle Ages was by leaving a “normal,” secular life for a “holy” (or holier) life of a monk, nun, or anchorite. It would not be until the growth of “lay piety” in the thirteenth century<sup>24</sup> that ordinary believers would begin looking for ways to live holier lives and seeking to answer the Call.

Another major way in which medieval Christians sought to answer the Call was through virginity or chastity. Carl W. Ernst identifies the monastic ideal of chastity as being one of the most extraordinary developments in early Christianity which, he implies, had obvious effects on how a book filled with erotic language would be interpreted

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<sup>23</sup> Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 1, *The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1984), 124. These earliest monks, often referred to as “the Desert Fathers,” seemed to have sought holier lives in response to the conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity under Constantine. Gonzalez writes that for some Christians, “the fact that the emperors declared themselves Christian, and that for this reason people were flocking to the church, was not a blessing, but rather a great apostasy. Some who tended to look at matters under this light, but did not wish to break communion with the rest of the church, withdrew to the desert, there to lead a life of meditation and asceticism. Since martyrdom was no longer possible, these people believed that the true athlete of Christ must continue training, if no longer for martyrdom, then for monastic life. The fourth century thus witnessed a massive exodus of devoted Christians to the deserts of Egypt and Syria.”

<sup>24</sup> Elizabeth Johnson, “Marian Devotion in the Western Church,” in *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, ed. Jill Raitt (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 392-393. Johnson states that the rise of the mendicant preachers of the thirteenth century helped bring spirituality to a more sensible, imaginative, human level.



in subsequent Christian history.<sup>25</sup> In the fourth century, Ambrose of Milan was "the first in the West to apply the language of the Song directly to the life of female virgins."<sup>26</sup> Commenting on this application, McGinn writes that,

it is Christ as the Divine Lover of individual virgin Christians (especially females) who occupies the center of the bishop's attention. The love relationship between the divine and human loves is portrayed through frequent evocation of the images and events of the Song, both in the central chapters of book 1 of *On Virgins* (1.6.38-9.53 with sixteen citations) and also at the end of book 2 (2.6.42-44 with four citations).<sup>27</sup>

In the fifth century, the church Father Jerome was also a major proponent of virginity.<sup>28</sup> Writing a letter to a young female Christian named Eustochium, Jerome personalized "the erotic language of the Song in which he invites Eustochium [the addressee] to appropriate the language of the text into her daily life 'so that despising the flesh you may be joined to your Bridegroom's embrace.'"<sup>29</sup> Jerome encouraged her to avoid mixing with the public in order to be open to spiritual encounters with the Divine Lover:

'Let the seclusion of your own chamber ever guard you; ever let the Bridegroom sport with you within (tecum sponsus ludat intrinsecus). If you pray, you are speaking with your Spouse; if you read, he is speaking to you. When sleep falls on you, he will come behind the wall and he will put his hand through the hole in the door and will touch your belly (Song 5:4 LXX). And you will awake and rise up and cry: "I am sick with love" (Song 5:8 LXX).'<sup>30</sup>

At the end of the sixth century, Venantius Fortunatus, "emphasized that Christ is wed only to the virgin who knew no other lover," describing their union "with erotic language reminiscent both of the Song of Songs and Roman love poetry."<sup>31</sup> Thus, one of the earliest interpreta-

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<sup>25</sup> Ernst, 2.

<sup>26</sup> McGinn, *Foundations*, 213.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 216. Jerome saw marriage as a result of the fall and only praised it insofar as it produced more virgins!

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 217. The brief quotation from Jerome comes from his *Epistle* 22.1.

<sup>30</sup> Jerome, *Epistle* 22.25; quoted in McGinn, *Foundations*, 217.

<sup>31</sup> McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism*, 31.

tions of the Song of Songs dealt specifically with the relationship between virginity and an intimate knowledge of God. McGinn writes that the reason virginity was held in such high esteem was that it was understood to restore the corrupt, fallen flesh to a purer state, "giving them [those who observed it] a foretaste of the untroubled bodily state that all the faithful will eventually enjoy."<sup>32</sup> Thus, men and women, renouncing sexual desire, were seen as able to know and understand God better, whom they sought as their one and only Lover.

As men and women of the laity became increasingly concerned for piety and their spirituality, those who were either unable or unwilling to enter a monastery or convent could observe chaste marriages in order to share in this unique relationship. Margery Kempe's experience in the fifteenth century serves as an excellent example. As a result of hearing a heavenly melody while lying in bed one night, Margery lost all interest in sexual intercourse with her husband.<sup>33</sup> In order to fulfill her marital duties, however, she had to consent to her husband's desire, but she no longer took pleasure in the act.<sup>34</sup> Eventually, after about three or four years after her own change of heart, Margery's husband consented to observing a chaste marriage.<sup>35</sup> Overall, the earliest years of Margery's conversion, or, better, transformation, seemed to have been filled with sexual torment. Not only did she nearly die during childbirth,<sup>36</sup> but she abandoned what she implies was an active, enjoyable sex life with her husband<sup>37</sup> for extreme bodily penance, and was ashamed of and tormented by a near-adulterous relationship.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps Margery's abandonment of sexual relations with her husband was a part of her submitting her will and desires to God. She had, after all, ignored God's call and pursued her own business ventures before finally submitting that night in bed.<sup>39</sup> She also gave up one of her favorite things in the entire world at God's command: meat.<sup>40</sup> Although Margery's exact experience may not have been typical--Margery herself was anything but average--, she serves

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<sup>32</sup> McGinn, *Foundations*, 214-215. After all, according to Ambrose, "angels preserve chastity; devils lose it."

<sup>33</sup> Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. B.A. Windeatt (London: Penguin Books, 1985), chap. 3. All quotations from Margery will come from this translation.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 4.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 3.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 1.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 3.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 4.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 2.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 5.

as an example of lay persons who began seeking a greater experience of personal piety and who did so by abstaining from sexual relationships.

A final way of answering the Call, open to clergy and laity alike, was through the various spiritual disciplines: prayer, reading Scripture, study, and contemplation. As mentioned above, Jerome had written to Eustochium that prayer was a way of speaking to her Spouse, while reading Scripture was the way in which the Spouse spoke to her. Such disciplines were ways in which any believer could learn more about and connect with God. A central part of reading and studying both Scripture and commentaries of the Church Fathers was contemplating their meaning; and such contemplation was both a way to increase knowledge and a form of worship. As mysticism began spreading, believers became increasingly concerned with experiencing a direct, immediate union with God during this life. A part of this mystic desire was the experience of an ecstatic vision, whether given by God without provocation or fervently requested by the individual believer. These ecstatic experiences, several of which will be discussed further below, allowed individuals to briefly taste and feel a glimpse of the heavenly marriage they so desperately hoped to obtain.

As men and women of the religious orders and laity sought to answer the Call, they experienced God in a variety of profound ways. Some felt an overwhelming sense of fear, others felt the love of God washing over them. Some cried, others laughed. Some were transported into the bright heavens, others were transported back to the dark and horrible scene of the Crucifixion. One common experience, however, was that of seeing and knowing God as the Divine Lover. Just as language taken from the Song of Songs was used to describe the relationship between God and the Church or God and the individual throughout the Middle Ages, so was that same language most often used to describe the believer's encounter with God. God, or, more specifically, Christ, was described as the Divine Lover, the Spouse, and the Bridegroom. This terminology was used almost universally, although some of the connotations of the language differed from writer to writer. Oftentimes, the line of demarcation, so to speak, separating one writer from another involved the nuances of erotic imagery and language taken from the Song of Songs. It is difficult to ignore the fact that the Song of Songs is an erotic book, though many have and still do. Whether or not a writer during the Middle Ages was comfortable employing erotic language to describe encounters with God likely had to do with an underlying view of sexuality and its contextual connotations. A good illustration of this is found at the very beginning of the Middle Ages with Augustine of Hippo.

Before Augustine, various Church writers had explored the

erotic imagery found in the Song of Songs. Much of Origen's reading of the Song of Songs and idea of mystical union was based on his adaptation of the Platonic concept of "Eros," or erotic love.<sup>41</sup> He also argued that Plato's myth of the birth of love in Zeus' garden was taken from the Song of Songs.<sup>42</sup> Origen's use of erotic language, however, should not be overstated. He interpreted some of the more popular images from the Song of Songs--such as the "kisses of [the] mouth" (1:2),<sup>43</sup> comparing the Bridegroom's breasts to wine (1:2b),<sup>44</sup> and the "wound of love" (2:5)<sup>45</sup> --allegorically without explicit sexual connotations. He nevertheless drew from the erotic imagery present within the

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<sup>41</sup> McGinn, *Foundations*, 119, 120, 125, 165-166. McGinn argues that Origen's adaptation of Plato's "Eros" is twofold: EROS I (God-Eros) and eros ii. For Origen, "the motive force powering the soul's ascent must be the transformation of the eros gone awry in us (eros ii) back to its transcendental strating place." McGinn writes that Origen's mysticism centers on the transformation of eros ii, the power of yearning desire implanted in the soul by the God who is EROS I. Thus, eros ii must be led away from its pursuit of material satisfactions and be educated by the Word to pursue its true object, the incbrating wine of the truths about the divine realm." Origen, "in adopting the erotic language of the Song of Songs to describe the soul's encounter with Christ came to affirm that God himself is Eros (Eros I)."

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 122. "Origen's interpretation, as usual, is both ecclesial and personal, moving through five levels of interpretation (not always as clearly defined as here): (1) from the grammatical citation of the text and (2) its dramatic or historical reconstruction, to (3) the deeper meanings of what it has to say about Christ's relation to the church, (4) its general message about the soul's itinerary, and (5) how we are to appropriate the message as our own. It is not necessary to follow all the steps in detail. The message is that the sensation of receiving kisses is to be read as the mind's reception of the teaching of the Word, conveyed both to the church and the individual soul. 'When her mind is filled with divine perception and understanding without the agency of human or angelic ministration, then she may believe that she has received the kisses of the Word of God himself' (*Comm. on Song*, book 1 [ed.91.12-17; Lawson, p. 61])."

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 122-123. "Thy breasts are better than wine' (Song 1:2b LXX) is interpreted as referring to the *principale cordis* (Greek *hegemonikon*), the inner ground of the heart of Christ upon which John, the beloved disciple, reposed. The treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3) that the perfect soul drinks from Christ's breast are even better than the wine she received from the Law and the Prophets (*Comm. on Song*, book 1 [ed. 91-101; Lawson, pp. 62-70])

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 121, 123. Origen combined Isa 49:2 ("He set me as a chosen arrow" LXX) with Song 2:5 ("I am wounded with love") "to create a rich and original teaching about the Word as the arrow or dart of the Father (and alternately the sword of Eph. 6:17), whose love strikes or wounds the soul." For Origen, the *amor caelestis*, the soul being pierced by dart/wound of love in the Song of Songs, is the central message of the Bible.

Song of Songs. Origen, as well as Gregory of Nyssa in the fourth century, placed a "great emphasis (differently conceived, to be sure) on the role of Christ, the Divine Lover made flesh, in the soul's return to God."<sup>46</sup> As mentioned before, Ambrose and Jerome both stressed the role of Christ as the Divine Lover of virgin (mostly female) Christians. In contrast to some of these somewhat "erotic" images or language taken from the Song of Songs, Augustine represented a growing wariness of sexuality as an adversary in the fallen world and something against which Christians must labor.<sup>47</sup> Carl W. Ernst writes that "Sexual love, for theologians like St. Augustine (who knew its charms quite well), was inextricably tied up with the doctrine of original sin and the concept of the body as somehow evil."<sup>48</sup> Consequently, Augustine, in his later writings, avoided the use of erotic language of the love between man and woman to describe encounters with God.<sup>49</sup> Bernard McGinn writes, "In his rather sparing use of the Song, Augustine adhered to an ecclesial reading: the Bride is always the church."<sup>50</sup> Perhaps due to the influence of Augustine, a wariness of the potentially erotic images in the Song of Songs predominated until the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

From Gregory the Great, writing in the sixth century, until the eleventh century, the use of erotic imagery of the Song of Songs to describe divine encounters did not enjoy the level of popularity that it would during the twelfth century and after.<sup>51</sup> Two writers, John of Fécamp and Peter Damian, who employed "the Song to describe the relation of the loving soul to the Divine Bridegroom," demonstrate "that the mystical use of the Bible's great love poem, begun with Origen, experienced a revival in the eleventh century that presaged the return of this book to a central role in western mysticism."<sup>52</sup> In a final section of one of his prayers, John of Fécamp "begs for the 'wound of love.' 'O elect arrow and sharpest of swords . . . pierce my heart through with the wound of your love, so that my soul may say, "I am wounded with charity"' (Song 2:5 in the LXX and Old Latin version)."<sup>53</sup> In his "Letter to a Nun," John speaks of the "kisses of his

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 260.

<sup>48</sup> Ernst, 2.

<sup>49</sup> McGinn, *Foundations*, 260.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> McGinn, *Growth*, 146. McGinn writes, "The monastic piety of the early Middle Ages was not all that much concerned with the erotic use of the Song of Songs."

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 137. The quotation from John comes from his *The Meditations of Saint Augustine*, 935.

mouth” in Song of Songs 1:2, saying,

‘You who seek the kiss of divine truth in most happy love, be open and see that the Lord is sweet (Ps 45:11). This desire is not human, but belongs only to those spouses who love God chastely. If you feel that you are inflamed to divine love by all the words of sacred Scripture, especially the most easily by those concerning the vision of God, you should not doubt that you are called “bride.”’<sup>54</sup>

For John, then, “those spouses who love God chastely”--note the emphasis on chastity--and seek God in Scripture experience a divine love as a bride.

An anonymous Latin poem, also from the eleventh century, demonstrates “how monastic women and men were already beginning to channel the power of eros into their attempts to achieve a union beyond human congress.”<sup>55</sup> The poem, the “Sequence on the Virgins,” employs a “remarkable evocation of erotic language to describe the encounter with God. The praise of the ‘happy nuptials’ (O felices nuptie), in which Christ sleeps with his virgins in ‘sweet repose’ (requies dulcis), recalls the language of the Song of Songs (see Song 1:15; 2:6; and 5:2).”<sup>56</sup> Part of the poem declares:

‘In these beds  
Christ sleeps with them:  
Happy the sleep,  
Sweet the rest,  
In which, when she is cherished,  
The loyal maiden,  
Within the embraces  
Of the heavenly Bridegroom,  
With his right arm  
Embracing her as a bride,  
His left arm under her head,  
She falls asleep.  
Wakeful in heart,  
In body she sleeps,  
On the Bridegroom’s loving

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<sup>54</sup> John of Fecamp, “Letter to a Nun,” 1; quoted in McGinn, *Growth*, 142. see also 481, n. 114.

<sup>55</sup> McGinn, *Growth*, 144. For the discussion of Origen’s understanding of “eros,” see n. 40 above.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

Breast she slumbers.<sup>57</sup>

Another part of the poem describes "the love-play between Christ the Lamb and the virgin souls":

‘Often the Lamb  
Leaps and prances,  
Bounding in their midst,  
Yet with the maidens  
He rests  
In the noonday heat.  
Upon their bosom  
He lies at mid-day,  
Between their breasts  
He sets his sleeping-place.’<sup>58</sup>

Interestingly, this poem is somewhat reminiscent of the playful, yet lustful account of Krishna as the cowherd and the Gopis found in Hindu literature.<sup>59</sup> Although this Christian poem is not necessarily as erotic, it demonstrates that Christian writers were becoming more inclined to using erotic imagery and language to describe the desire for and union with Christ.

From the twelfth century on, Christians frequently drew from the more erotic language of the Song of Songs in order to describe their experience of God. McGinn writes, "In the history of mysticism, the twelfth century is unsurpassed in its exploration of the experience of spousal love of Christ, Brautmystik as it is called in German."<sup>60</sup> The most common images drawn from the Song of Songs included: kisses, the wound of love, breasts, the Bridegroom's chamber, and the bed. The Cistercian Gilbert of Hoyland, on several occasions,

notes the need for nakedness on the part of the lovers in the mystical encounter. On the 'little bed of love' the Bride, 'when she is completely forgetful of herself and totally stripped of herself, passes over into him, and, as his beloved,

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<sup>57</sup> "Sequence on the Virgins," stanzas 7b-7c; quoted in McGinn, *Growth*, 145.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, stanzas 10a-11b; quoted in McGinn, *Growth*, 145-146.

<sup>59</sup> This story is found, I believe, in various forms in the *Bhagavata Puranas* and the *Mahabharata*. In the story, Krishna lives as a cowherder and has the ability to summon the Gopis with a flute. The women, responding to his call, abandon all of their work and tasks in order to dance and play with him in the forest, whether night or day. They also abandon themselves fully to him, worshipping him as their lord.

<sup>60</sup> McGinn, *Growth*, 154-155.

she is, as it were, clothed with him.’<sup>61</sup>

Gilbert discusses the “little bed” image further,

‘In the bed that is his alone, she boils over when driven to it by the fire of the Bridegroom’s love. She departs from her self, poured out and pouring herself out. She is totally transformed into him; absorbed into a similar mode of being (qualitas). . . . In this third [bed] she is completely in his company. We might even say that there is no one there but he alone.’<sup>62</sup>

An interesting feature of Gilbert’s description of the individual’s encounter with Christ, the Bridegroom, is the idea of “melting”<sup>63</sup> or dissolving into Christ until the individual is no longer discernible and only Christ remains; this is mystical union at its purest. John of Ford, a fellow Cistercian, also explored “the twofold effect” of fire and love, with a few erotic implications. John writes,

‘The Lord’s Bride sits by the fire and grows so warm from it that she melts like wax (Ps 21:14). Whatever is corruptible in her . . . is burned away by the heat of flaming charity. Before the face of this fire, scents of myrrh and incense gently waft from her bosom. . . . From this fire, the Bride blazes out into powerful speech, either speaking of hidden and ineffable things with the Bridegroom in rejoicing and entreaty, or else taking pleasure in conversing with the maidens about the more secret dealings that the Spouse has had with her.’<sup>64</sup>

Elsewhere, John draws on more direct, erotic images, “such as in his references to the sexual intercourse (copula coniugalis) between the Bride and the Divine Word.”<sup>65</sup> An extremely erotic description of an

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 300-301.

<sup>62</sup> Gilbert of Hoyland, *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, 2; quoted in McGinn, *Growth*, 302.

<sup>63</sup> McGinn, *Growth*, 302. In *Sermon 15.9*, Gilbert writes, “‘Therefore, the bride, aglow with some gift of the blazing word of the Bridegroom’s embrace, melts from the perfumer’s powder into finer wisps of smoke [see Sg. 3:6], from the dust of the humbled virtues into the smoke of glory. What do you think her arrival will be like, when her ascent is so delightful? What is her destination when she ascends in such beauty?... Perhaps it is the bed of the Beloved.’”

<sup>64</sup> John of Ford, *Sermons on the Final Verses of the Song of Songs*, 109.9; quoted in McGinn, *Growth*, 309.

<sup>65</sup> McGinn, *Growth*, 307.



encounter with Christ is found in Rupert of Deutz, a Benedictine. Describing a dream he had, he writes that he saw himself before an altar with Christ's image, which he desired to embrace and kiss.<sup>66</sup> After the altar opened up to receive him, he writes,

'As I impatiently entered [the altar], I took hold "of him whom my soul loves" (Song 1:6). I held him, I embraced him, I kissed him for a long time. I felt how deeply he appreciated this sign of love when in the midst of the kiss he opened his mouth so that I could kiss him more deeply.'<sup>67</sup>

Caroline Walker Bynum has demonstrated how two thirteenth-century women, Hadewijch and Beatrice of Nazareth, drew from the Song of Songs in describing their encounters with God as both erotic and physically nourishing.<sup>68</sup> Hadewijch had a vision of Christ with outstretched arms inviting to receive the embraces and kisses of believers<sup>69</sup> and describes erotic union of mouths which, as Bynum puts it,

is sometimes frankly erotic, underlining the extent to which all the senses are involved in this knowing and experiencing God: 'They penetrate each other in such a way that neither of the two distinguishes himself from the other. But they both abide in one another in fruition, mouth in mouth, heart in heart, body in body, soul in soul.'<sup>70</sup>

Bynum recounts another of Hadewijch's encounters with God, which she claims "reads like a description of sexual orgasm,"

'He came in the form and clothing of a Man, as he was on the day when he gave his Body for the first time . . . he gave himself to me in the shape of the Sacrament, in its outward form . . . and then he gave me to drink from the chalice. . . . After that he came himself to me, took me entirely in his arms, and pressed me to him; and all my members felt his in full felici-

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 332.

<sup>67</sup> Rupert of Deutz, *De Gloria et Honore Filii Hominiis super Mattheum*, 12; quoted in McGinn, *Growth*, 332.

<sup>68</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); see esp. chap. 5, "Food in the Writings of Women Mystics."

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 155-156. The quotation from Hadewijch comes from her Letter 9.

ty, in accordance with the desire of my heart and my humanity [na miere herten begherten. na miere menscheit]. So I was outwardly satisfied and fully transported.’<sup>71</sup>

Writing about the same time as Hadewijch, Beatrice of Nazareth also drew on both erotic and physically nourishing imagery to describe encounters with God. Bynum writes that “Beatrice’s union with Christ in the eucharist was . . . both awe-ful and intimate, intensely erotic and excruciatingly painful--as paradoxical as the images of love in Hadewijch’s poems.”<sup>72</sup> In a vision in which Christ, standing at the altar, offers himself to Beatrice as communion, she is “caught up” in ecstasy (drawing from 2 Cor 12:2):

‘Refreshed by this most health-giving communion, in the marvelous embrace of the same divinity, she suddenly felt her whole soul, diffused through all the members of her body, so violently caught up that the same little body felt itself in all its individual members strongly gathered into the embrace. Indeed, in the union of this sweet embrace, the Lord applied the heart of his chosen one to his own heart, and he absorbed her whole spirit within himself.’<sup>73</sup>

In her “The Seven Manners of Holy Love,” Beatrice wrote that “love’s work is this: to desire the most intimate union (dat naeste wesen), the closest adhesion to that state in which the soul abandons herself to love” to her spouse, or Betrothed.<sup>74</sup>

Another thirteenth-century female writer, Mechtild of Magdeburg, wrote of her intimate, mystical encounters with God, who referred to her as “my Beloved.”<sup>75</sup> In a vivid, beautiful description of a soul entering the heavenly court, God

shows her His divine heart: it is like reddish gold, burning in a large charcoal fire. Then He places her in His ardent heart so that the Noble Prince and the little servant girl embrace

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<sup>71</sup> Hadewijch, Vision 7; quoted in Bynum, *Feast*, 156.

<sup>72</sup> Bynum, *Feast*, 162.

<sup>73</sup> *Vita Beatricis*, bk. 3, chap. 2; quoted in Bynum, *Feast*, 162.

<sup>74</sup> Beatrice of Nazareth, “The Seven Manners of Holy Love,” in *Women Mystics in Medieval Europe*, ed. Emilie Zum Brum and Georgette Epiney-Burgard, trans. Sheila Hughes (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1989), 91, 94.

<sup>75</sup> Mechtild of Magdeburg, “The Flowing Light of the Godhead,” in *Women Mystics in Medieval Europe*, ed. Emile Zum Brum and Georgette Epiney-Burgard, trans. Sheila Hughes (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1989), II.26. All quotations from Mechthild come from this translation.

and are united as water and wine. Then she is brought to naught and abandons herself, as if she had no strength left, while He is sick with love for her, as He had always been, for (in this desire) there can be neither growth nor lessening. Thus she speaks: 'Lord, You are my consolation, my desire, my flowing fountain, my sun, and I am your mirror.' Such is the journey to court of the loving soul, who cannot be without God.<sup>76</sup>

Elsewhere, Mechtilde is referred to as God's "fiancée,"<sup>77</sup> refers to God as her "Betrothed by love . . . since before time began,"<sup>78</sup> and describes God as burning in desire for her and resting on her bosom.<sup>79</sup> In one vision, she describes the need to cast off exterior virtues in the language of an intimate encounter,

Then the Most Beloved goes toward the Most Beautiful in the hidden chambers in the invisible Deity. There she finds the couch and the pleasure of Love, and God awaiting her in a superhuman fashion. This is what Our Lord says: -- Stay, Lady Soul. -- What is your wish, Lord? -- That you should be naked. -- Lord, how can this happen to me? -- Lady Soul, you are so 'co-natured' in Me that nothing can be interposed between you and Me.<sup>80</sup>

A distinguishable feature of Mechtilde's descriptions of her, or the individual soul's encounters with God, is her supreme confidence in the love of God. God, it seems, is the one who cannot live without her! Although Mechtilde was not the only writer to feel this way, most had focused primarily on the love of the soul, or Bride, attempting to find and anticipating the arrival of the Bridegroom. A similar confidence is found in Julian of Norwich, who, in the fourteenth century, wrote that "in the joining and the union he is our very true spouse and we his beloved wife and his fair maiden, with which wife he was never displeased."<sup>81</sup>

For the final example of how believers used erotic imagery to

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., I.4.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., I.44, IV. 12.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., I.44.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., I.17.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., I.44.

<sup>81</sup> Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, trans. Edmund Colledge, O.S.A. and James Walsh, S.J. (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), chap. 58. All quotations from Julian will come from this translation.

describe their encounters with God, we turn once again to Margery Kempe. Margery, though denying herself and coming to abhor sexual relations with her husband, drew heavily on bridal and marriage imagery when describing her relationship to Christ. At one point, she recounts how she was commanded to make a ring with the inscription "Jesus est amor meus" and upon losing it, she referred to it as her "good wedding ring to Jesus Christ."<sup>82</sup> In the next chapter, Margery describes a vision in which God the Father expressed his desire to marry her. God says to her, "'Daughter, I will have you wedded to my Godhead, because I shall show you my secrets and my counsels, for you shall live with me without end.'"<sup>83</sup> Instead of rejoicing at this announcement, however, Margery says that she is afraid. All of her love had been fixed on the person of Christ who, out of compassion, tries to explain to the Father that she does not know how to answer. The Father then takes Margery by the spiritual hand and leads her before the heavenly court full of angels and saints, saying, "'I take you, Margery, for my wedded wife, for fairer, for fowler, for richer, for poorer, provided that you are humble and meek in doing what I command you.'"<sup>84</sup> A short while later, Christ tells Margery that he would take her unashamedly as a wife if he were in bodily form, and in a confusing mixture of wife-daughter-mother language, declares,

'Therefore I must be intimate with you, and live in your bed with you. Daughter, you greatly desire to see me, and you may boldly, when you are in bed, take me to you as your wedded husband, as your dear darling, and as your sweet son, for I want to be loved as a son should be loved by the mother, and I want you to love me, daughter, as a good wife ought to love her husband. Therefore you can boldly take me in your arms of your soul and kiss my mouth, my head, and my feet as sweetly as you want.'<sup>85</sup>

Margery's description of an erotic encounter with Christ as her spouse is interesting in light of the fact that sexual intercourse with her husband, something that she seemed to enjoy, was one of the things that she grew to distaste as a result of what was, ultimately, her response to the Call.

One thing must be noted, however, about the use of erotic language in describing encounters with God. Almost all of the writers

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<sup>82</sup> Margery Kempe, chap. 31.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 32.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 36.

who described such encounters relied on the language and images present within the Song of Songs. The imagery of lovers, marriage, and erotic language were therefore the starting point for medieval Christians trying to describe their own pursuit of or mystical encounters with God. Although some writers chose to go beyond the imagery of the Song of Songs and can be described as overtly erotic, most writers were attempting to describe their loving desire for God and did not really mean sex when describing those encounters. Bernard of Clairvaux, for example, was one of the most influential writers in re-popularizing both the personal application and erotic language of the Song of Songs, yet his writings are not erotic, *per se*. Although he speaks of God as a husband and of "spousal love,"<sup>86</sup> his allegorical interpretations have more to do with spiritual instruction and growth than ecstatic pleasure. According to McGinn, love is ultimately the center of Bernard's mysticism.<sup>87</sup> Bynum, in pointing out the connection between images that Bernard takes from the Song of Songs and his use of feminine images or maternal language when referring to Christ, argues, "Breasts, to Bernard, are a symbol of the pouring out towards others in affectivity or of instruction and almost invariably suggests to him a discussion of the duties of prelates or abbots."<sup>88</sup> She finds, of course, that the most complex use of maternal imagery found in Bernard is taken directly from the Song of Songs. Bernard comments, "'When she [the Bride] said, then, 'Your breasts are better than wine,' she meant: 'The richness of the grace that flows from your breasts contributes far more to my spiritual progress than the biting reprimands of superiors.'"<sup>89</sup> Overall, then, it is safe to conclude that the images and language of sexual enjoyment and union were employed by medieval writers to describe their desire to experience temporal and, eventually, perfect spiritual union with the God whom they loved and sought.

One of the most fascinating ways in which medieval writers

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<sup>86</sup> McGinn, *Growth*, 198-199. In *Sermon* 83.5, Bernard writes, "Spousal, or marital, love is above all pure or sweet love, but it is also a love that has many other dimensions. It is wise and prudent, that is, not contrary to intellect and understanding, the higher dimensions of human knowing. It is also vehement and forceful in ways that may seem insane to those who have not experience it. Such love is completely mutual, and it is perfectly satisfying in the senses that it is the highest form of vision or contemplation of God and the most exalted type of union. Finally, it sets in order all the other affectoins of the soul."

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 193, 223.

<sup>88</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus As Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 115.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

described their encounters with God is in the language of an unfulfilled longing; a desire to be with and experience God perfectly intertwined with the reality of the imperfections of this world, which the writers had yet to escape. In the fourth century, Gregory of Nyssa wrote "that the goal of the Christian life, both here and in heaven, is the endless pursuit of the inexhaustible divine nature."<sup>90</sup> His understanding came from "the way in which he interpreted the restless and unfulfilled character of the encounter with the Divine Lover recounted in the Song of Songs."<sup>91</sup> Gregory felt that as Christians sought God, they only experienced God in a limited sense that left them longing for more and even more inflamed with their desire for union with the Divine. McGinn writes that, when compared to Origen, there can be found in Gregory

both a greater erotic tension on the level of language and a more systematic treatment of the paradoxical character of every perception of the divine presence (aithesis tou parousias) as an experience of a presence that is also an absence. 'She realizes that her sought-after love is known only in her impossibility to comprehend his essence, and that every sign becomes a hindrance to those who seek him' (Hom. 6).<sup>92</sup>

A contemporary of Gregory, Ambrose of Milan, also saw within the Song of Songs the idea of this unfulfilled longing. Commenting on what he calls "the dialectic of presence and absence" in Ambrose,<sup>93</sup> McGinn writes,

The Christian life, the bishop implies, consists of a complex game of love in which the Word's coming sometimes revives the soul, but the Word's absence also has a role to play in empowering the soul to the moral effect needed to progress toward a fullness of union not to be attained until the body has been laid aside.<sup>94</sup>

Jean Leclercq, commenting on the significance of the Song of Songs (Canticle of Canticles) to medieval monks and Gregory the Great, wrote,

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<sup>90</sup> McGinn, *Foundations*, 139.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

The Canticle is the poem of the pursuit which is the basis for the whole program of monastic life: *quaerere Deum*, a pursuit which will reach its end only in eternity but which already obtains fulfillment here in an obscure possession; and the latter increases desire which is the form love takes here below. The Canticle is the dialogue between the bridegroom and the bride who are seeking each other, calling to each other, growing nearer to each other, and who find they are separated just when they believe they are finally about to be united. St. Gregory had given perfect expression to this alternating intimacy and separation in his *Moralia in Job*--for he spoke of the Canticle in works other than the commentary he had devoted to it: 'The bridegroom hides when he is being sought so that, not finding him, the bride will search for him with renewed ardor; and the bride's search is prolonged so that the delay will increase her capacity for God, and she will eventually find in a fuller measure what she had been seeking.'<sup>95</sup>

In the twelfth century, William of Thierry also explored this dynamic. McGinn writes that for William,

the Song of Songs does not present a picture of the Bride in constant possession of the Divine Lover; rather, it portrays a drama of pursuit, pleasure of contact, and subsequent loss, thus confirming the mystical soul's experience of the unending oscillation between pursuing and enjoying God, between absence and presence. Since our loving enjoyment of God here below can never be final, we are always caught between anxious desire and temporary fruition. But the vehemens voluntas for the absent Groom is itself a form of presence--the dynamic root for the mutuality of love and knowledge in both the search and the enjoyment.<sup>96</sup>

The Cistercian Baldwin of Ford, describing love as a type of sickness because "as long as we are in this life we cannot have full possession of the Bridegroom and therefore the Bride is said to 'languish on the bed,'" "sick with the 'affliction that is health.'"<sup>97</sup> Bynum points out that for Hadewijch, the paradox of love is that "her central food

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<sup>95</sup> Jean Leclercq, O.S.B., *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catharine Misrahi, 3d ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), 85.

<sup>96</sup> McGinn, *Growth*, 241.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

images are images of an eating that leaves one hungry, of an unfulfilled craving that nevertheless is the only food.”<sup>98</sup> Beatrice of Nazareth put it marvelously,

For Love leaves her [the soul seeking after God] neither peace, nor respite, nor rest. Love raises her up and casts her down, suddenly draws her close only to torment her later, makes her die to bring her back to life again, wounds her and heals her, drives her to madness and then makes her wise again.<sup>99</sup>

Julian of Norwich wrote, “For until I am substantially united to him, I can never have perfect rest or true happiness.”<sup>100</sup> Bynum even goes so far as to say that Catherine of Genoa’s “purgatory is Christ’s love, with which we can never fully join.”<sup>101</sup> Overall, then, it can be said that encountering God in this life was for these medieval writers the source of both their utmost pleasure and torment, in that they could only glimpse or briefly taste the bliss of the divine union with God for which they longed incessantly.

By the end of the fifteenth century, the Middle Ages were coming to a close and both the Church and Western society were heading for tumultuous changes. The truth is, of course, that things had been gradually changing for some time, although those who were living had no idea that they were preparing to enter a new era. Did Christians, then, still tend to view God as the Divine Lover? How did they respond to the call, “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away,” which had been so important during much of the Middle Ages? In order to answer this question, it is important to remember that there were two main ways of interpreting the Song of Songs since Origen first adapted the allegorical interpretation of the Jewish rabbis in the third century. God could be seen as either the Lover of the Church or the individual soul, and many times as both. The tendency to see God as married to the Church, the Bride of Christ, has never really gone away. Many Christians, in both the Catholic and Protestant traditions alike, still rely on this imagery today. In fact, this imagery is often reinforced with Jesus’ parables, such as the Matthean addition to the parable of the wedding banquet (22:10-14), Matthew’s parable of the

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<sup>98</sup> Bynum, *Feast*, 158.

<sup>99</sup> Beatrice of Nazareth, 91.

<sup>100</sup> Julian of Norwich, chap. 5.

<sup>101</sup> Bynum, *Feast*, 183-184. For Catherine, whose central metaphor is bread, she writes, “Such is the hell of the hungry who, the closer they come to this bread, the more they are aware that they do not as yet have it. Therein yearning for that bread increases, because it is their joy.”



ten bridesmaids (25:1-13), and the interpretation of "the marriage supper of the Lamb" in Revelation 19:9.

It is possible, however, that the tendency to describe personal encounters with God in terms of marriage and other language taken from the Song of Songs may have waned by the end of the Middle Ages. As previously mentioned, McGinn concluded that the twelfth century was "unsurpassed in its exploration of the experience of spousal love of Christ."<sup>102</sup> This does not mean, however, that such exploration had faded entirely by the Late Middle Ages. Margery Kempe, who viewed her relationship with Christ as a marriage as wholeheartedly as anyone else, wrote of her experiences during the late fourteenth century. In fact, both Theresa of Avila and John of the Cross would rely on such images taken from the Song of Songs in the sixteenth century. For example, John, in his *Living Flame of Love*, used the Bride from Song of Songs to elaborate on the experience of that flame of love. He writes in his exposition of his third stanza,

the soul gives deepest thanks to its Spouse for the great favours which it receives from union with Him, for by means of this union He has given it great and abundant knowledge of Himself . . . . For the true lover is content only when all that he is, and all that he is worth and can be worth, and all that he has and can have, are employed in the Beloved; and the more he has to employ thus, the greater is the pleasure that he receives in giving it.<sup>103</sup>

In his fourth stanza, he writes,

Here the soul turns to its Spouse with great love, magnifying Him and giving Him thanks for two wondrous effects which He sometimes produces within it by means of this union, noting likewise in what way He produces each and also the effect upon itself which in this case is the result thereof.<sup>104</sup>

He then continues,

Thine awakening, O Word and Spouse, in the centre and depth of my soul, which is its pure and inmost substance, wherein alone, secretly and in silence, Thou dwellest as its

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<sup>102</sup> McGinn, *Growth*, 154-155.

<sup>103</sup> St. John of the Cross, *Living Flame of Love*, ed. and trans. E. Allison Peers (New York: Triumph Books, 1991), III.1.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* IV.1.

Lord, not only as in Thine own house, nor even as in Thine own bed, but as intimately and closely united as in mine own bosom--how gentle and how loving is this!<sup>105</sup>

Thus, the reliance on the images of the Song of Songs, especially that of marriage, did not entirely disappear during the Late Middle Ages and after. The Reformers tended to avoid the extremes of some of the mystics and may not have carried on many of their writings of spousal love or erotic union. Nevertheless, Theresa of Avila, who even took part in the Counter-Reformation, still relied on those images in the sixteenth century. Although there is certainly less emphasis in the Church as a whole today--in all its diversity--there are still men and women who, drawing from the profound images of the Song of Songs, tend to view God as a spouse to whom they will be eternally married--although perhaps more often in a communal sense than personal. Thus, the medieval tendency to see and speak of God as the Divine Lover has not disappeared and we can still learn much from those men and women who sought, with all their mind, strength, and soul, to know and experience God, their hope and true love.

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, IV. 3.

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## THE AMERICAN ENEMY: THE INTERNMENT OF JAPANESE AMERICANS DURING WORLD WAR II

*AMANDA E. MCGUIRE*

President Franklin D. Roosevelt called 7 December 1941 “a date which will live in infamy.” For the people who lived through that tragic day, and the years of war that followed, it is undeniably so. When Japan attacked the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, life changed for every American. The attack took the country by surprise and devastated a vital part of America’s armed forces, the Pacific Fleet. The attack created widespread fear in the hearts of Americans across the country and panic at the idea of an impending war and the threat of a large-scale invasion. Congress reacted to the threat quickly by declaring war on Japan. Japan’s ally Germany responded by declaring war on the United States. The United States was suddenly plunged into the midst of a war it had attempted to avoid. Fear swept the country as Americans worried about what the future would hold. For one segment of the American population, however, all of these fears were compounded. Japan’s attack on the United States and the war that followed changed the way that Japanese Americans were viewed throughout the country and had a drastic impact on their lives. When President Roosevelt announced on 8 December that the United States was at war with Japan, he also announced that “all citizens, denizens or subjects of the Empire of Japan . . . are termed alien enemies” and that “alien enemies deemed dangerous to the public peace or safety of the United States . . . are subject to summary apprehension.”<sup>1</sup> Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the reactions of public officials created an atmosphere of fear and paranoia that would lead to the internment of thousands of loyal Americans.

The United States in 1941 was the home to thousands of *Issei*,

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<sup>1</sup> Frank E. Chuman. *The Bamboo People: Japanese-Americans, Their History and the Law*. (Chicago, IL: Japanese American Research Project, 1981) 160.

first generation Japanese immigrants, who, for legal reasons, were denied citizenship, and Nisei, the children of immigrants who did possess American citizenship because they had been born in the United States. For these people, the vast majority of whom considered themselves true and loyal Americans, the Japanese attack on the United States brought about a different type of fear. The Issei and Nisei were unsure how their neighbors and fellow Americans would react and feared that they, dedicated and loyal Americans, would be considered the enemy because of their race and ancestry. They asked themselves, "what will happen to us, people who are the same race as the enemy, wearing the same face as the enemy, yet bleeding for America, wanting desperately to tell Americans how sorry, how ashamed, how angry we are?"<sup>2</sup> These people were fiercely loyal to the United States, but realized that the fears of their neighbors would be exploited to the detriment of Japanese-Americans.

In the end, the worst fears of Japanese-Americans came true. As a result of the atmosphere of fear created in the United States by the attack on Pearl Harbor, the government concluded that the Japanese on the west coast posed a threat to the security of the nation. To counter this threat, almost 120,000 people of Japanese descent, citizens and aliens alike, were evacuated by the government from the western United States and relocated to ten internment camps in various locations around the country. Over 70,000 of these people were American citizens, and a majority of the others had been in the United States for 20 to 40 years, but were not eligible for citizenship because of legal barriers.<sup>3</sup> The fear and paranoia created in the United States following the attack on Pearl Harbor led to the evacuation and internment of thousands of Japanese-American aliens and citizens during World War II as a defense measure to protect the nation from invasion.

When Japan attacked the naval base at Pearl Harbor, many Americans immediately feared that there had been some sort of espionage involved. The so-called "Fifth Column" was perceived as a real and credible threat. The Fifth Column was believed to consist of covert and subversive actions by civilians in collaboration with the enemy. It was believed that Fifth Column work had aided Hitler's Nazi Germany in invading and taking over Europe, and the fear that such activity would occur in the United States was widespread. Anyone of Japanese descent was immediately suspected of acting as an informer for the Japanese military. There was fear that a further attack or invasion could be coordinated or aided by those of Japanese descent

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<sup>2</sup> Bill Hosokawa. *Nisei, the Quiet Americans: The Story of a People*. (Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1992) 223.

<sup>3</sup> Chuman, 143.

living in the United States especially on the west coast.

The fear of subversion and Fifth Column activity in the United States did not create panic immediately following the attack on Pearl Harbor, but the comments of public leaders led to the creation of an atmosphere of paranoia. On 15 December, a week after the attack, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox returned from an inspection of the damage at Pearl Harbor. Despite the evidence that the attack had been so effective in part because of American incompetence, Knox stated that it was the result of Fifth Column work and indirectly implicated the Japanese-Americans in Hawaii for supplying the Japanese Navy with information.<sup>4</sup> Knox's statements did not reflect the reality of the situation in Hawaii, but they had an inflammatory impact nonetheless. He incited fear of the so-called "Yellow Peril" by stating, without basis, at a press conference that "the most effective Fifth Column work of the entire war was done in Hawaii . . ."<sup>5</sup> At this same press conference Knox issued his official report on the attack, which did not make mention of any Fifth Column activity and in fact praised the Japanese-Americans of Hawaii who had helped to defend the naval base.<sup>6</sup> Rumors of Fifth Column activity were widespread, but did not accurately portray the situation on the west coast. Before and during the war, there was not a single recorded case of espionage, sabotage, or any act of disloyalty by a Japanese alien or Japanese-American citizen.<sup>7</sup> In reality, even when the Japanese military attempted to infiltrate the Japanese-American community in order to gain information, those attempts failed. An officer of the Japanese Navy, Ensign Takeo Yoshikawa was sent to Hawaii in order to gather information about ship and troop movements in preparation for the attack, but was unable to gather sufficient information. In his monograph *Yamamoto, the Man Who Menaced America*, John Dean Potter writes that:

He (Yoshikawa) used to strike up conversations with American sailors in bars. He cautiously tried to obtain information from Nisei girls who entertained American sailors. His first great disappointment came when he made tentative attempts to sound out these girls and other Hawaii-born Japanese. To his astonishment he discovered they were fanatically loyal to the United States.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Rodger Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II*. (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1993) 28.

<sup>5</sup> Chuman, 147.

<sup>6</sup> Hosokawa, 252.

<sup>7</sup> Chuman, 147.

<sup>8</sup> Hosokawa, 218.

Despite the fact that the Japanese in the United States were fiercely loyal to their adopted country, rumors of active Fifth Column work persisted, especially in California and other areas of the west coast. These rumors, despite being groundless, were fueled by the paranoid and blatantly false statements of government officials like Secretary Knox. A report on the attack was filed by Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Owen Roberts, who led the inquiry at the order of President Roosevelt. Roberts stated that the attack had been assisted by a Japanese-American Fifth Column and went so far as to criticize the FBI for allowing Japanese-Americans even those freedoms granted by the Constitution.<sup>9</sup> California Governor Culbert Olsen fueled even more fears in California when he said in a radio address on 4 February that “it is known that there are Japanese residents of California who have sought to aid the Japanese enemy by way of communicating information, or have shown indications of preparation for fifth column activities.”<sup>10</sup> The rumors of subversive activity on the part of Japanese-Americans did not die out when no clear evidence of their validity surfaced. Instead, the absence of proof became in itself seen as proof of an active Fifth Column at work in the United States. Commenting on the apparent lack of subversive activity, columnist Walter Lippman, one of the most respected journalists in America of the time, wrote on 12 February 1942 for a California paper that:

Since the outbreak of the Japanese war there has been no important sabotage on the Pacific Coast. From what we know about Hawaii and the Fifth Column in Europe, this is not, as some have liked to think, a sign that there is nothing to be feared. It is a sign that the blow is well organized and that it is held back until it can be struck with maximum effect.<sup>11</sup>

These comments were written over two months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, despite the fact that in that time no Japanese-Americans were found to be acting in any way thought to be disloyal toward the United States. Japanese-Americans all over the country had in fact demonstrated their outrage at the attack and pledged their loyalty to the United States. The very day of the attack, Saburo Kido, president of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), the largest Japanese-American organization in the country, sent a telegraph to President Roosevelt. On behalf of all Japanese-Americans and Japanese aliens, he promised “in this solemn hour we pledge our

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<sup>9</sup> Daniels, 37.

<sup>10</sup> Daniels, 42.

<sup>11</sup> Chuman, 149.



fullest cooperation to you, Mr. President, and to our land. We are ready and prepared to extend every effort to repel this invasion with our fellow Americans.”<sup>12</sup> Despite Kido’s pledge, and the lack of actual proof of any Fifth Column activity on the part of the Japanese in the United States, Americans became convinced that Japanese-Americans and aliens posed a real and credible threat to the security of the country, and began to demand that the government take steps to ensure that another attack would not occur.

Immediately following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States government had taken some measured steps against the Japanese-American community. Hundreds of aliens classified as “potentially dangerous” were immediately taken into custody by the FBI.<sup>13</sup> Within a week of the attack, 595 Japanese and 187 Germans on the west coast had been placed under arrest and were suspected of “hostile intent or action against the national security.”<sup>14</sup> Upon hearing of the attack, Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau took steps to secure the country as much as possible. His first act was to double the Secret Service guard on duty at the White House. His second was to immediately close the nation’s borders to all Japanese nationals and to remove any licenses for Japanese firms or individuals to do business.<sup>15</sup> The bank accounts of all enemy aliens (German and Italian as well as Japanese) were immediately frozen when war was declared, but because many Japanese were legally unable to become US citizens, this impacted a much larger number of Japanese in America than Germans or Italians.<sup>16</sup> When these actions took place, the Japanese community in the United States was robbed of both its leadership and its assets.<sup>17</sup> The Japanese community was virtually paralyzed by these actions. Despite this, the Federal Government continued to take actions against the perceived threat it felt from the Japanese community.

On 10 December 1941 FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover told Morgenthau that he believed there was no cause for additional action to be taken against the Japanese-Americans. His suggestion, however, was not followed. That same day a Treasury Department agent falsely informed the West Coast Military Authority that 20,000 Japanese in San Francisco were “ready for organized action.” Based solely on this report, and without any verification, the Ninth Corps Area staff began

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<sup>12</sup> Hosokawa, 225.

<sup>13</sup> Hosokawa, 244.

<sup>14</sup> Chuman, 154.

<sup>15</sup> Hosokawa, 243.

<sup>16</sup> Daniels, 26.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

to outline a plan to evacuate the Japanese from the area.<sup>18</sup> After discussion and debate, Morgenthau concluded that the idea of evacuating the Japanese from the west coast “was not only hysterical but impractical,” and left the responsibility for fighting subversion and espionage to the Justice Department.<sup>19</sup> Despite Morgenthau’s belief and recommendation, the idea of evacuating the Japanese community was not abandoned, but instead became one of the largest domestic undertakings of the entire war.

The idea of a large-scale evacuation of enemy aliens was brought up almost immediately following the attack on Pearl Harbor and the declaration of war. Initial planning had already begun in some areas. In the San Francisco area, plans were laid for an evacuation, but not carried out. On 10 December, General John L. DeWitt, who commanded the Western Defense Command and later organized much of the initial phases of the evacuation suggested an idea “to collect all alien subjects . . . of enemy nations and remove them to the interior of the United States . . . to prevent their surreptitious return.”<sup>20</sup> Plans for a massive evacuation were developed and rejected. Initially, the prospect of coordinating and executing such a massive undertaking left many officials searching for other alternatives. According to the information these officials had at the time, from the 1940 census, there were 41,000 Japanese aliens, 58,000 Italian aliens, and 22,000 German aliens living in California alone.<sup>21</sup>

DeWitt and the Western Defense Command continued to draft plans for the evacuation for enemy aliens, eventually reducing those to be evacuated to only those of Japanese descent. On 19 February, they received official help in this endeavor from President Roosevelt himself, when he issued Executive Order No. 9066. It became the tool used to remove thousands of loyal Japanese-Americans from the west coast and relocate them in internment camps throughout the country. The order enabled the Secretary of War and military commanders to create military areas wherein they had the power to summarily exclude and remove any persons on the basis of the possible threat they might pose to national security. It stated that the military commander in charge of each area would have the power to restrict “the right of any person to enter, remain in, or leave.”<sup>22</sup> In essence, Roosevelt handed the Department of War the power and ability to put into action the plans that had been drawn up to evacuate the Japanese aliens on the

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<sup>18</sup> Hosokawa 244.

<sup>19</sup> Hosokawa 245.

<sup>20</sup> Chuman 153.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Daniels 128.

west coast. Combined with the fear and paranoia that was sweeping the region, the opportunity to do so was quickly turned into the carefully planned and coordinated systematic relocation and internment of thousands of loyal Americans.

After Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 9066, the region DeWitt commanded, the Western Defense Command, was almost immediately divided into Military Areas, and plans to restrict and move the Japanese in the region began to go into effect. The region was divided into prohibited and restricted zones on 2 March. The military authorities recommended that all enemy aliens be removed from the prohibited areas and encouraged them to leave.<sup>23</sup> When DeWitt's plan was developed and introduced, it covered all of California, Washington, and Oregon. His attempts to expand it to cover the entire Western Defense Command, which included Idaho, Utah, Nevada, and Montana were blocked by the War Department. The accepted military areas were primarily along the coast line, in major cities, and surrounding military installations. The rights of the Japanese in the military areas were quickly restricted. DeWitt's command began to issue proclamations concerning the movements of all enemy aliens in the region. Although there were no requirements forcing anyone to move at that time, in was out of these areas that the Japanese were encouraged to relocate. The movements of Japanese in these areas were restricted to their work places, or within five miles of their homes, with a strictly enforced eight o'clock p.m. curfew.<sup>24</sup> The restrictions of the movements of the Japanese quickly became increasingly stringent.

Although the opportunity to leave was limited, many Japanese in the military areas with the means to do so took advantage of the little freedom they still possessed to move out of the military areas; but on 30 March, all persons of Japanese descent, citizens and aliens, were forbidden to leave the areas.<sup>25</sup> No Japanese had actually been ordered out of the military areas, but this soon changed with the enactment by Congress of Public Law No. 503. Without declaring a state of martial law, this law gave any military commander the ability to order any individual out of a military area.<sup>26</sup> Up until this point, all of the Japanese who left the west coast had done so voluntarily. The forced evacuations began shortly thereafter when about fifty Japanese families on Bainbridge Island, across the Puget Sound from Seattle, were evacuated to a relocation facility in Manzanar, California. They were

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<sup>23</sup> Daniels 53.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Daniels 54.

the first of over 100,000 Japanese to be ordered into internment camps.<sup>27</sup> Following the evacuation of the Bainbridge Island Japanese, the entire military zone was divided into 107 separate evacuations zones in order to expedite the evacuation and relocation process.

Roosevelt again helped the coordination of the evacuation effort when he signed Executive Order No. 9102. The order officially established the War Relocation Authority (WRA) under the Office of Emergency Management of the Executive Office of the President. Later on the WRA came under the administration of the Department of the Interior. The purpose of the WRA was to oversee and administer the temporary assembly centers, ten relocations centers, and the transport of the Japanese who would be interned in them. Dr. Milton Eisenhower, brother to General Dwight Eisenhower, was appointed its first director and was followed in June by Dillon Myer.<sup>28</sup> While the military commanders like DeWitt organized and executed the evacuation of the Japanese, the WRA organized and coordinated the transportation for the interned Japanese and the camps that would become the homes for these displaced Americans. Officially, Executive Order No. 9102 authorized the WRA to:

Formulate and effectuate a program for the removal, from areas designated from time to time by the Secretary of War or appropriate military commander under the authority of Executive Order No. 9066 . . . of the persons or classes designated under such Executive Order and for their relocation, maintenance and supervision.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to several temporary camps used to transition internees, the WRA created relocation centers at Manzanar and Tule Lake, California; Poston and Gila River, Arizona; Minidoka, Idaho; Heart Mountain, Wyoming; Granada, Colorado; Topaz, Utah and Rohrer and Jerome, Arkansas. Each of these camps became the home to thousands of interned Japanese, who were imprisoned for no other reason than their race, without due process or just cause. At their peaks, each camp held from 8,000-20,000 internees. Peak estimates for each are:

Manzanar, CA	10,000
Tule Lake, CA	16,000
Poston, AZ	20,000
Gila River, AZ	15,000

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Chuman 146.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

Minidoka, ID	10,000
Heart Mountain, WY	10,000
Granada, CO	8,000
Topaz, UT	10,000
Rohrer, AR	10,000
Jerome, AR	10,000
TOTAL	119,000 <sup>30</sup>

The creation, organization and implementation of this camp system was a massive undertaking. By June of 1942, all of the Japanese had been removed from the prohibited military zones. In less than four months, the entire system was established and put into motion. Thousands of workers were needed to get the WRA program started, but many of the camps were not completed when the internees began to arrive. A racetrack at Tanforan, California was used as an assembly center and temporary camp. Internees were housed in what had been the track's stables while they awaited transport to the camp at Topaz. Conditions were crowded and miserable for most of the internees, with much of the work to prepare the camps done by the Japanese interned there.

The camps had been filled with Japanese by June of 1942. Almost as soon as they were full, release efforts began. There were four separate releases for different groups of people interned in the camps. The first released were college students, accounting for about 4,300 people.<sup>31</sup> Another 10,000 camp internees were released to provide labor for the local agriculture business. Using internees as labor source was a tactic often used as a way to keep internees between stays at assembly centers and relocation centers.<sup>32</sup> A third group of internees were released to work with the US military as linguists. The same people who were imprisoned because they posed a security threat to the country were now asked to help in the effort to win the war. About 6,000 Nisei volunteered or were drafted to attend the Military Intelligence Specialist School.<sup>33</sup> They provided vital assistance to the war effort by acting as translators for the military and the government. The last group to be released from the camps were Japanese to be exchanged for American diplomats with the Japanese government. All of these groups of people were released because of pressure from outside the WRA.<sup>34</sup> Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes told the

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<sup>30</sup> Chuman 144.

<sup>31</sup> Daniels 73.

<sup>32</sup> Daniels 75.

<sup>33</sup> Daniels 77.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

New York Times in June of 1942, "I do not like the idea of loyal citizens . . . being kept in relocation centers any longer than need be."<sup>35</sup> For many of the Japanese, early release through these programs was a welcome relief, but many others never got the opportunity. It was not until December of 1944, when the US Supreme Court declared the detention of Americans based on their Japanese descent unconstitutional in the case of *Ex parte Mitsuye Endo* that the majority of the Japanese interned in the ten relocation centers began to be released. By December of 1945 only the center at Tule Lake still held internees.<sup>36</sup>

The Japanese Americans detained for months and years at the relocation centers under the WRA were victims of the racism that plagued the west coast of the United States, as well as the of the fear and panic that the attack on Pearl Harbor created. One of the biggest questions surrounding the internment of the Japanese has to do with why similar measures were not taken against German and Italian aliens or German Americans and Italian Americans. Many scholars believe that two major, primarily psychological, factors combined to cause this disparity in the treatment of enemy aliens from different backgrounds. First of all, the enemies in Europe were led by individuals that were easily recognized and caricaturized by Americans. Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini were extremely recognizable symbols of the European enemies. Most Americans did not recognize Hirohito or Tojo as the enemy on the same level that they equated Hitler and Mussolini with the enemy. Instead, the Japanese people in general became viewed as the enemy.<sup>37</sup> The second major factor was the fact that all Japanese seemed to fit the same racial pattern. Unlike Germans or Italians, people of Japanese descent all seemed to look the same to Americans. They were all easily recognizable as "Japs." The creation of a stereotypical cartoon "Jap" was easily done; all Japanese suddenly became the same "buck-toothed, bespectacled, monkey-faced sneak."<sup>38</sup>

Although the fear of the "Yellow Peril" and the perceived threat posed by America's Japanese population were widespread, such extreme measures as relocation and internment were not employed everywhere. They were the exception rather than the norm. In Hawaii, the American territory that had actually been attacked by the enemy and had the most reason to fear subversive acts, no such measures were taken. Hawaii's population was 38% Japanese, but military

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<sup>35</sup> Daniels 75.

<sup>36</sup> Daniels 72.

<sup>37</sup> Hosokawa 247.

<sup>38</sup> Hosokawa 245.

governor Lt. General De Los Emmos never ordered an evacuation.<sup>39</sup> In another case, Colorado governor Ralph Carr announced when evacuations began that any displaced Nisei or Issei moving into Colorado would not be rejected or relocated. He was the only government official to do so.<sup>40</sup>

As for the Japanese victims of relocation, the impact on their lives was devastating. Thousands of evacuees were forced to leave their homes with little notice, and attempted to sell their belongings for what little compensation they could get. The majority of them never returned to their homes on the west coast. For many of them though, the hardest part to accept was the betrayal they had experienced at the hands of the country they claimed as home. Father Kitagawa, a Japanese American priest, described the feelings of the Issei who had sacrificed their lives in Japan to create new opportunities in America:

Had their hearts been more with Japan than with the United States, they would have taken the FBI activity as quite justifiable and would have endured it without complaint. Because they had so completely identified themselves, in their minds at least, with America. They interpreted the action as hostile and as a betrayal of their loyalty.<sup>41</sup>

For the Issei the betrayal they experienced in their new adopted country was a shock, but understandable. For the Nisei, American citizens by birth, the hurt they experienced went even deeper. Nisei historian Bill Hosokawa described their feelings saying, "The Issei could understand the inevitability of being treated as enemy aliens. But the Nisei, who had taken deep pride in their rights as citizens, were depressed and frustrated to find themselves being considered one with the enemy Jap."<sup>42</sup>

The Japanese people of the United States became victims of fear and racism when the United States went to war in late 1941. Their lives were interrupted and literally placed on hold during the war. They did not receive any recompense until President Gerald Ford issued Proclamation 4417 in 1976, repealing Roosevelt's Executive Order No. 9066. Congress made a gesture of restitution and redress to the surviving camp internees by giving each of them \$20,000 as restitution under the Civil Rights Act of 1988. Although the United States government admitted its wrongdoing and acknowledged the loyalty

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<sup>39</sup> Chuman 146.

<sup>40</sup> Hosokawa 225.

<sup>41</sup> Hosokawa 240.

<sup>42</sup> Hosokawa 246-7.

and faithfulness of the interned Japanese, this small gesture was in no way adequate to make up for the abuse the Japanese bore and the sacrifices they were forced to make by their country.

Thousands of loyal Japanese suffered betrayal and humiliation at the hands of the country they had come to love. The treatment they received was a direct result of the exaggerated fears and racism of the American public. In a country that values freedom and liberty for all people without regard to race, the summary elimination of basic human rights should be regarded as inexcusable. This episode in history is often lost behind the more noble achievements of the United States during World War II. While those achievements are laudable, it remains necessary to also examine the black marks of the nation's past. In order to judge history fairly and critically, it is vital to examine even the darkest parts of American history, to acknowledge such heinous mistakes, and to begin the process of retribution and reconciliation.



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**PREDESTINATION VERSUS FREE WILL:  
A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE  
ELECTION DEBATE**

*KAREN NAOMI BURNETTE*

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**I. Introduction**

For centuries, theologians have debated and continue to debate the topic of election. The purpose of this paper is to examine what the Bible has to say concerning election. Due to space limitations, a selection of major representative passages will be examined. The focus will be primarily on New Testament verses, but Old Testament texts prominent in the theological debates are also included.

Before exploring these passages, some background needs to be given. There are two basic perspectives concerning election: predestination and free will. According to the Harper's Bible Dictionary, "predestination emphasizes a divine predetermination of human destiny in conformity with an eternal plan" (Achtemeier 819). Predestinarians believe that God chose who would receive salvation before the world was created (VanDyke 1088). Free will theists believe that people have an "inherent power to choose with equal ease between alternatives" (Wright 43-44). These perspectives do not necessarily divide people into two separate groups. Most Christians tend to mix or shift between the ideas, but overall they lean towards one of

these theologies (Basinger and Basinger 9).

One's interpretation of the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility is an essential aspect of one's theology of election. Divine sovereignty deals with God's attributes. When considering God's attributes, several assumptions can be made. If God is all-powerful, then God has the power to determine who will and will not receive salvation. If God knows everything in the past, present, and future, then God knows who will and will not receive salvation. If God is loving, then God would want everyone to receive salvation. These assumptions form a basis for predestinarian arguments. Human responsibility refers to people being held accountable by God for the decisions they make. For a person's decision to be genuine, the person must have been able to choose differently (Reichenbach in Basinger and Basinger 102-104). Free will theists use this logic as a foundation for their theology. Theologians try to understand how these two elements, divine sovereignty and human responsibility, coexist.

When considering the issue of election and the related ideas of divine sovereignty and human freedom, the issue arises concerning the degree to which human freedom or responsibility limits God's sovereignty or control (Basinger 13). Predestinarians claim that free will theism proposes a threat to God's sovereignty because God would not have any control over occurrences in the world (Reichenbach in Basinger and Basinger 91). Without some degree of control, God cannot ensure His eternal purposes will be realized (Feinberg in Basinger and Basinger 125).

Similarly, free will theists see problems with predestinarian theology. If God predestines what people will decide, such as choosing whether or not to receive God's offer of salvation, then God cannot hold them responsible for their decisions. Humans are not much more than God's puppets who only have the "illusion of choice" (Pinnock in Basinger and Basinger 151). Also, there are questions about God's goodness because if God is good and predestines people to be saved, God should predestine everyone to be saved (Reichenbach in Basinger and Basinger 50). Additionally, if God does not allow people to choose differently than God desires, it is divine "rape" (Sanders 246).

Acknowledging that various viewpoints about election exist, I selected two texts traditionally quoted in arguments presented by each of the major positions (predestination and free will) and two passages which seem to have aspects supporting both perspectives. The passages were selected for several reasons but primarily for balance between the different perspectives. Concordances, Bible dictionaries, and theology books were used to create a list of New Testament verses which relate to the issue of election. Bible passages pertaining to the subject of salvation were researched as to how they relate to choice. The question

was asked, "According to this text, do people have a choice in the matter of their salvation?" Commentaries were consulted to provide background information on these texts. After studying many verses, the following representative texts were selected (all are frequently cited in resources pertaining to election): two Old Testament passages are Deuteronomy 7:6-11, involving God's choice of the Israelites, and Joshua 24:14-24, dealing with the Israelites' choice to follow God; John 3:16-21 and John 6:37-45, intertwining aspects of both free will and predestination; Romans 8:28-33 and Ephesians 1:3-14, typically favored by those believing in predestination; and 1 Timothy 2:1-7 and 2 Peter 3:5-10, usually cited by free will proponents. Though these texts are typically used to support one side of the debate or the other, interpretations given by both sides for each passage are explained.

## **II. Deuteronomy 7:6-11**

"For you are a people holy to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples; but it is because the LORD loves you, and is keeping the oath which he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, and requites to their face those who hate him, by destroying them; he will not be slack with him who hates him, he will requite him to his face. You shall therefore be careful to do the commandment, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command you this day." [Revised Standard Version, as are all other Bible references unless otherwise noted.]

The New Testament has many allusions to Hebrew texts and uses terms and phrases for Christians which resemble terms used in the Old Testament to describe Israel. For example, New Testament Christians and Old Testament Israelites are described as chosen by God (Ephesians 1:4; Deuteronomy 7:6). In Galatians 3:27-29, Paul refers to those "baptized into Christ" as being "Abraham's seed."

Because of these relationships, studying the Old Testament is important for gaining a better understanding of the New Testament. Two Old Testament texts, Deuteronomy 7:6-11 and Joshua 24:14-24, have been chosen for their relevance to the topic of predestination and free will.

According to John Tullock, Deuteronomy 7 is about "holy land, holy people, and holy war" (Tullock 207). Verses 6-11 are a discourse about Israel's calling or "chosenness" to be holy and the responsibilities of that calling. Verse six describes the Israelites as holy and chosen. "Holy" means "separate" or "set apart." Ronald Clements states that all the Israelites, the whole nation, were chosen and holy (Clements 350). The Israelites were to be different from other peoples. They were not to act like others because they were called to be holy (Weinfeld 367). The verse implies that the Israelite situation is uncommon. Clements states that the "covenant relationship between Israel and the Lord God was... a unique act" (Clements 349).

A predestinarian interpretation of this covenantal act is that it was unique to the elect, or Israel. The other, non-elect nations would not be given opportunity to have this experience of having a covenant with God. From a free will standpoint, the uniqueness is in the type of relationship being offered, a relationship unlike the religious ideas of other nations. This uniqueness does not mean the relationship is limited to the Israelites. Indeed, the Israelites are to share this unique type of relationship with others (Weinfeld 367).

Verse six begins by stating that the Israelites "are" holy to God. The verse does not say the Israelites "can be" holy to God. The use of the word "are" indicates present reality, while "can be" implies possibility. The statement implies that the Israelites have already been made holy. A predestinarian perspective is that they were made holy before creation. A free will theist would say that the decision for Israel to be holy was God's decision and does not take away the need for human response. Though the Israelites have already been chosen by God to be holy, they still need to affirm God's calling with obedience as commanded in verse 11. This affirmation is based on a free decision to obey.

Another aspect of Israel's calling is God's reason for calling Israel. God's reason for choosing Israel was not because Israel was a large nation. Actually, Israel was small (v.7). Moshe Weinfeld states that the rabbis of the time knew Israel was small and believed that God chose Israel because of its humility (Weinfeld 368-369). However, verse eight states that God chose Israel because God loved Israel and was faithful to the covenant. Commentaries state that Israel was chosen by grace. Israel had no reason to be prideful, for they had done nothing to be worthy of their chosenness (Christensen 159).

The question is whether the Israelites were chosen by grace to be the holy people of God or were chosen by grace to have the opportunity to be the holy people of God. The first possibility leans towards a predestinarian theology. The Israelites were predestined to be God's people, and they had no choice about it. The decision was solely God's to make. According to predestinarians, saying that the Israelites had to choose to be God's holy people means that they had to do something. A requirement for the Israelites to do something would mean that their position as God's chosen people would not be by grace. The second possibility is supportive of free will theism. God invited the Israelites as a group to be holy, and they would have to decide whether or not to be obedient (Christensen 160). The grace is in the fact that the Israelites could do nothing to deserve the opportunity to be God's holy people.

In verses 9-10 love and mercy are contrasted with judgment. Verse nine seems to be giving a condition with the statement that God's faithfulness, covenant, and love remain "with those who love him and keep his commandments." Verse ten states that God will punish the disobedient people, those who hate God. God loves those who love God and keep the commandments. Duane L. Christensen states that God is faithful in continuing to love the chosen as long as they are obedient, but God will punish the disobedient (Christensen 160). Israel has a responsibility to respond to God's love by obeying God's commands. God's love provides inspiration for Israel to return the divine love in the form of obedience (159-160).

These two verses seem to imply that God's actions depend to some degree on the people's choice of obedience or disobedience. If people choose obedience, God blesses them with love, but if they choose to disobey, God destroys them. The debate is whether the choice is free or determined. A free will theist perspective is that God gives the option, people respond, and then God delivers the consequences of their free decision. However, a predestinarian would state that God determines what decision the people will make with regard to obedience or disobedience.

Obviously, the Israelites were not always obedient, and they were punished. If Israel's decisions were predetermined, then one would have to conclude that God predestined the disobedience of Israel and the resulting punishment. This theology calls into question aspects concerning human responsibility, God's justice, and God's love. If God predestines disobedience, people have no choice about being disobedient and can therefore not be held responsible. God would not be justified in punishing them for doing what they were predestined to do. Nor can a God be said to be loving if that God predestines people to be disobedient and therefore predestines them to receive punish-



ment.

Free will theology seems more reasonable in this area. The Israelites choose obedience or disobedience. They are responsible for their free choices and must face the consequences of those choices. God makes the offer clear and displays love by allowing the people freedom to choose versus forcing certain decisions.

Furthermore, verse 11 contains the phrase "be careful to do." If people are predestined to do something, they will do it whether or not they are careful or intentional in doing it. Predestined individuals do not need to be careful. Therefore, if predestination is true, this phrase is pointless. On the other hand, this phrase is supportive of free will in that people need to be careful in their free choices because they may freely choose to do something that God does not desire for them to do.

God loved Israel and had a covenant agreement with the nation. God chose Israel to be different from the other nations. The Israelites had no reason to be prideful about being chosen because they were chosen by grace. Israel was called to respond to being chosen by obeying God's commandments.

Overall, the free will theists have a stronger argument in relation to these verses from Deuteronomy 7. Although the idea that Israel was chosen by God's grace emphasizes God's initiative and therefore favors predestination theology, it is not incompatible with free will theism. People can be held accountable for how they respond to God's divine initiative of offering salvation. Also, although Israel was chosen from all the nations to have a special relationship with God, that relationship was not limited to them because through Israel, all the nations were to be blessed (Genesis 26:4). Additionally, free will theism is on more solid ground with interpretations of obedience and the necessity of being careful to do as God commands.

## **II. Joshua 24:14-24**

[14] "Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. [15] And if you be unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." [16] Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; [17] for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our fathers

up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, and who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land; therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God." But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the LORD; for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you after having done you good." And the people said to Joshua, "Nay, but we will serve the LORD." Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD, to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses." He said, "Then put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the LORD, the God of Israel." And the people said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and his voice we will obey."

In Joshua 24, Joshua leads a ceremony in which the Israelites profess their loyalty to God (Butler 268). In verse 14, Joshua delivers a command, and then in verse 15, he states the options and his decision. The subsequent verses are an exchange of responses between Joshua and the Israelites concerning God's command and the available options. With regard to the predestination-free will debate, the basic argument revolves around the issue of choice. Other Old Testament passages such as Deuteronomy 7:6 and 14:2 focus on Israel as God's chosen people. These texts affirm that God chose Israel, but in Joshua 24:15, Israel is given the opportunity to choose God (Morton 374-375). Motivating factors in Israel's choice to follow God are given in verses 17-18 as the Israelites acknowledge the role God has played in their history. In this passage, the Israelites decide to express a commitment to God. The debate is whether this decision was based on Israel's free will to choose God or God's predetermination of what they would choose.

Verse 15 begins with a conditional phrase. The phrase "if you be unwilling" implies that Israel could be unwilling. Then, Joshua states "choose this day whom you will serve" which implies that the decision belongs to the Israelites. This statement is followed by the term "whether" and the options of serving different gods.

A free will theist can interpret this verse as supporting free

will theism. First of all, the Israelites are given a choice. For people to have a genuine choice, they must have at least two options, and they must be able to choose either option (Reichenbach in Basinger and Basinger 102-104). Verse 15 gives three options: 1) to serve the LORD, 2) to serve "the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River," or 3) to serve "the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell." Also, the use of "whether" implies that each option is a genuine possibility. According to this verse, the Israelites seem to have ownership of their decision and can freely choose. Therefore, they have free will.

Verse 15 ends with Joshua stating his own decision. Joshua begins his decision statement with the word "but" which implies that Joshua's decision is separate from the decisions of the rest of the Israelites. His decision is not dependant upon the decision of the others, nor is the Israelites' decision dependent upon Joshua's decision (Morton 375). Joshua simply states what he and his household will do and lets the rest make their own decision.

Verses 19-20 add further support to the idea that the Israelites could make a decision different from Joshua's decision. Joshua confronts the Israelites on their decision to follow God. He tells them that they cannot serve God because of their sinfulness (vv. 19-20). Joshua's statements seem to indicate that he did not expect the Israelites to be committed to God even though he had committed his household to follow God. However, in this passage, Israel chooses to follow God. Another aspect of the free will-predestination debate is the aspect of causal factors. According to Trent C. Butler, Israel had a choice to serve God or idols. Israel was to look at God's record and determine if serving God was better than following alternative religions (274). In verses 17 and 18, the Israelites acknowledge God's work in the past, and this acknowledgment is part of the reason why the Israelites choose to commit to serve God.

Could Israel, after acknowledging God's work, still choose to follow other gods? Determinists would explain that God's work in the history of the Israelites was so great and influential that the Israelites' decision was determined by these actions. Given the conditions of God's history and the consequences of disobedience, Israel could not have chosen differently (Feinberg in Basinger and Basinger 21). Predestinarians can expound on this idea by stating that God predetermined the conditions and therefore predestined the decision made by Israel. Indeterminists and free will theists can respond by stating that despite these influences, Israel still could have chosen differently (Feinberg in Basinger and Basinger 20-21).

In verse 19, Joshua states that Israel cannot serve God. Predestinarians can restate this idea as saying that Israel cannot choose

to serve God. To serve God is a privilege; the opportunity is a gracious gift. The Israelites can do nothing to be worthy of the relationship which allows them to serve God. The only way they can serve God is by God predestining them to do so. Free will theists counter this argument by agreeing that the offer of the covenant is a gracious gift but also stating that the Israelites have free will to accept or reject the offer. Free will theists can agree with the predestinarian perspective that the "cannot" emphasizes the unworthiness of Israel to be chosen, but this word does not take away the free choice which was given to them.

Another possible predestinarian interpretation of verse 19 is that God foreknew that the Israelites would not be faithful and communicated this knowledge to Joshua who then told the Israelites that they could not be faithful. In verse 20, Joshua shares with the Israelites the future consequences which will come because of their lack of faithfulness. However, according to this line of thinking, verse 20 would be better read as "When you forsake the LORD" instead of "If you forsake the LORD" (emphasis mine). Young's Literal Translation of the Bible uses "when," but other translations such as the King James Version, the New American Standard, the New International Version, the New Living Translation, and Today's English Version use "if." Although this argument which supports predestination is possible, its evidence is very weak. Because "if," which as a conditional word is supportive of free will, is used more frequently and in more renowned translations than "when" which supports predestination, the free will argument seems stronger.

Verse 22 deals with responsibility. Joshua says to the Israelites, "you are witnesses" and "you have chosen." Joshua's statement identifies the responsibility for the decision as belonging to the Israelites. In response to Joshua's statement, the Israelites affirm their responsibility by stating, "we are witnesses."

Free will theism gains further support from this verse dealing with responsibility. As mentioned before, according to free will theism, if God is just, God does not hold people responsible for actions they cannot choose. In verse 22, the Israelites are accepting responsibility. In order for the Israelites to be accepting responsibility, they must have been able to make a genuine alternative choice, or God is unjust (Reichenbach in Basinger and Basinger 102-104).

This passage seems to strongly support free will theism. Although there are possible predestinarian interpretations, these arguments are matched with stronger free will counter-arguments or counter-explanations. Predestinarian theology has difficulty making sense of this passage. Joshua delivers a command, but he gives counter-commands and consequences as if the Israelites can choose between

any of the options. If predestination is true, then Joshua seems to be delivering a message which gives an illusion of choice. Free will explanations which state that God has graciously given the Israelites an offer which they can accept or reject more easily explains the text than predestinarian interpretations.

#### **IV. John 3:16-21**

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God."

Several issues concerning election are addressed in this passage. The passage includes phrases that seem to support free will and phrases that seem to favor predestination. Salvation includes elements of divine initiative and human response. God has initiated the relationship by sending Jesus. The incarnation of Jesus demands a human response. When examining these two themes, several things need to be considered. One needs to consider to whom God's initiative is directed, what the purposes for these actions are, and when these actions and purposes began.

Verses 16 and 17 discuss God sending Jesus into the world and the purpose of this action. Both verses use the term "world." Verse 17 states that God sent Jesus "into the world...that the world might be saved" (emphasis mine). The definition one uses for "world" in this context affects how one views the human response. "The world" is exposed to God's initiative and must respond. Most commentaries agree that "world" refers to everybody, the entire world. In John, the term "world" or "kosmos" tends to refer to those who are sinful and opposed to God (O'Day 552). William E. Hull states that though the world "obviously did not love him," God loved "the entire world" and had mercy. This mercy was not limited to the covenant

people of Israel but was extended to include everyone (Hull 245). George R. Beasley-Murray concurs: "The incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Son of God were directed to the salvation of all humanity, not to a segment of it" (Beasley-Murray 51). According to these commentators and others, if "world" refers to the entire world, then salvation is offered to the entire world.

Free will theists conclude that if salvation is offered to everyone, then the reason people do not accept salvation must be due to their choices, not God's choice. Free will theists conclude that the predestination standpoint implies that though all people are offered the gift of salvation, some cannot accept the gift because they were predestined not to accept it. If this assumption on the part of predestinarians is true, then God would not really love the entire world but only part of it. God would be cruel by offering people something they could not have (Geisler in Basinger and Basinger 69).

One analogy used by free will theists involves a man who sees three boys drowning in a lake. Warning signs were posted around the lake, but the boys went swimming there anyway. According to the free will argument, the man is not obligated to help these boys who should not have been swimming in the lake. However, if the man does not try to help the boys, then people will think he does not love them. If the man helps two of them but refuses to help the other one, people will think he does not love the boy he did not try to save. Since God loves and can save the world, God offers to save everyone. At the same time, God does not force people to accept the offer of salvation (Geisler in Basinger and Basinger 69-70).

This scenario is problematic. It does not address the boys' ability to accept the man's offer to help. A predestinarian who interprets "world" in John 3 to mean "everyone" would state that the man could offer to help all three boys, but the third boy could possibly not have the ability to accept the offer. Normally, anyone who was drowning would accept an offer for help if (s)he could accept this offer. According to predestinarians, God is not unloving if God offers salvation to everyone even though some of them cannot accept the offer. The offer alone is an act of love and grace.

Some predestinarians conclude that the term "world" does not mean "the entire world." "World" can be defined as those who believe, or "whoever believes in him" (v. 16). This interpretation would mean that God loved those who would believe in Jesus. R. K. McGregor Wright disagrees with John 3:16 being used as a proof-text for free will theism. In his translation of John 3:16 from the Greek, he replaces "that whosoever believeth" with "in order that every one believing." Thus, his translation reads: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, in order that every one believing in him

may not perish, but have everlasting life." "Whosoever" does not refer to everyone in the world but to the "particular group" who was predestined to believe (Wright 159).

One problem with Wright's argument is that most major versions of the Bible do not translate John 3:16 as he does. The New International Version, the New American Standard Bible, the King James Version, and the Revised Standard Version all use "whoever" or "whosoever" believes. Young's Literal Translation is the closest to Wright's translation. It uses the phrase, "everyone who is believing." This version, like Wright's, describes "believing" as an action that has already begun. However, the vast majority of modern translations use the less restrictive language.

Verse 17 states God's purpose as being salvation, not condemnation. This verse seems to say that God would not will people to be eternally doomed. Additionally, verse 18 states that those who are condemned are condemned because they did not believe. These phrases imply that God's will is not for people to go to hell, but people are judged by their own decisions not to believe (Brown 147).

However, verse 18 also includes the phrase, "condemned already," implying that condemnation was predetermined. Predestinarians such as Wright understand this phrase in verse 18 to mean that a person's eternal resting place is already decided, even before the person makes a decision concerning Christ (Wright 50). According to predestinarian thought, verse 17 describes Jesus's job as to invite and give the elect opportunity to accept their calling (163-164). Free will proponents provide a different interpretation. According to Hull, "already" means that while one may not yet be physically dead, the person is already condemned to spiritual death. The person is condemned because (s)he has already, while physically living, made the decision to reject Christ (Hull 244). Gerald L. Borchert gives a concurring report that the condemnation is not only in the future but also in the present (Borchert 1051).

Verses 19-21 discuss "the light." Light exposes things that are hidden. Raymond Brown explains that Jesus, as "the light," brings out the true character of people (Brown 148). Jesus exposes people for what they are. One could interpret this statement to mean that "the light" reveals who is and is not among the predestined elect.

Hull states that as people are confronted with the light, they are forced to respond (Hull 245). There are two possible reactions, and each reaction has a consequence. Those who respond positively, or believe, are not condemned but receive salvation. The believer comes into the light, and God's mercy and grace are revealed. Others respond negatively. They avoid the light because the light reveals their sins. These people would rather stay in the darkness than have their

faults revealed, and they receive condemnation. (Beasley-Murray 51). Whether the response is a free choice or based on predetermined selection of who would and would not accept the light can be debated. Hull concludes that the light of Jesus does not reveal who has been predetermined to receive and who has been denied salvation. He explains that "God determines the necessity, the alternatives, and the consequences of the decision, but this only reinforces the urgency and clarity with which each man determines what his response will be." (Hull 245). In other words, Jesus reveals the sinful state of humans, and people, of their own volition, make a decision to either step into the light, receiving grace, or run from the light, receiving judgment (245).

Several commentaries quote Rudolf Bultmann's comment that when a man encounters Jesus, he sees who he "really is and what he always was" (Bultmann 159). This phrase seems to be advocating predestination, but it is followed by a disclaimer which opposes predestination. Bultmann states, "But [what people are and always were] is revealed in such a way that the decision is made only now." A person is already inclined more towards good or towards evil, but the person cannot know the direction of this inclination until (s)he makes a decision concerning Christ (159).

Though Bultmann seems to be attempting to support free will and refute predestination, his arguments can be interpreted in a way that the two concepts can co-exist. One does not know whether (s)he loves the light or the dark more, and the person can therefore freely, in his/her own mind, choose. Whether or not God knows a person's inclination, every person's state is already determined because each person has always been inclined in one direction or another. Theologians debate whether a person has free choice or only the illusion of free choice if the person does not know what (s)he will choose, but the decision is already determined by the innate character of the person. One question is whether or not a person can act contrary to his/her innate character, or essence.

John 3:16-21 has been defined as "one of the best known theological summations concerning salvation in the Bible" (Borchert 1051). It includes several aspects of salvation including the initiating love of God, possible human responses, and the consequences of those responses. While this passage, or part of this passage, is well-known, the theological implications of interpretations of this text can be quite deep. Theologians and commentators have wrestled with this text and its implications, and several different views have been presented here. The overall perspective of the text is that God loves the world, meaning everybody, and has given Jesus as the way to eternal life. Some people accept this offer while others refuse.



The general predestinarian perspective is that God sent Jesus into the world to save the predetermined elect. These elect would come to the light of Jesus while the non-elect would reject him and stay in spiritual darkness. Wright's interpretation of "world" and his translation are weak in that his translation is not confirmed by major published Bible translations. Although verse 18 includes the word "already" which seems to support predestination, the surrounding context does not seem to be as supportive.

Free will theists interpret this passage to state that God wants and offers salvation for everyone because God loves everyone. The offer of salvation comes in the form of the light, Jesus, who reveals the sinful state of people. People then must choose to accept or reject the gift of salvation which is deliverance from their sinful states. The free will interpretation seems to focus on the context of the passage and does not deviate from major Bible translations to make its points.

#### **V. John 6:37-45**

"All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will not cast out. [For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me; and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." [The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" Jesus answered them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Every one who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me."

John 6:37-45 is much like John 3:16-21. Both include phrases and ideas which can be interpreted to support free will theism or predestination. Both passages include elements of divine initiative and human response. William E. Hull describes these elements as "twin themes" which appear throughout the book of John (Hull 275). The passage in chapter 3 discusses light and darkness. This section of chapter 6 discusses seeing, hearing, teaching, and learning as they

relate to being drawn or coming to God.

Verse 37 mentions God's gift to Jesus. This gift is people who will come to Jesus. Predestinarians interpret the verse to mean that people come to Jesus because God has given them to Jesus. The verse states "all that the Father gives me will come." The word "all" does not refer to everyone but is qualified by the phrase, "that the Father gives me." R. K. McGregor Wright describes this gift as a "category" of people who "will certainly come" and "will certainly be received" (Wright 134). In his interpretation, God has chosen a group of people to give to Jesus. The phrase "will come" expresses the certainty that these elected people will eventually respond positively and willingly to this calling (131). Wright's interpretation alludes to the Calvinist idea of irresistible grace. Wright states that the elect are grateful that God "overrode" their sinful desires (59). Though a person may be resistant to the gospel, if the person is among the elect, God will overcome that resistance. Human will cannot impede God's will (134). One problem with this perspective is that it presents God as authoritarian and salvation as a mechanical process. The relational aspect of God and salvation seems non-existent.

Additionally, according to predestinarians, this verse declares that apostasy, or denouncing previous conversion to Christianity, is "impossible." The second half of verse 37 states, "him who comes to me I will not cast out." Those who come to Christ cannot be "cast out" and therefore cannot leave the faith. If a person claims to renounce the faith, then that person was not among the elect in the first place. Because those who come cannot be "cast out," they cannot become apostates which means they do not have free will. If people have free will, then they must be able to decide to follow Christ but then later decide not to follow Christ. Therefore, because apostasy is impossible, free will is also impossible (Feinberg in Basinger and Basinger 35). God has chosen the elect and draws them to Jesus. Nothing can prevent the elect's eventual coming to and remaining with Jesus.

Free will theists interpret verse 37 in a different way. People who will come or are willing to come to Jesus are given by God to Jesus. Jesus then accepts these people. Some people are willing to believe, and God confirms to them that what they believe is true. These people who are willing to come are the "all" that God gives to Jesus in verse 37 (Hull 275). Predestinarians use the second half of verse 37 to refute apostasy and therefore free will. Free will theists counter that "will not cast out" does not refer to apostasy but refers to acceptance versus rejection. "Will not cast out" means that Jesus will not refuse salvation to anyone who is willing to come to him.

The term "will" is frequently used in verses 38-40. In verse 38, Jesus states that he was sent to do the will of the One (God) who

sent him which leads to the question, "What is God's will?" Verses 39 and 40 mention three aspects of God's will. God desires that no one given to Jesus be lost, that people have eternal life, and that people be resurrected. The people given to Jesus are the same people who will be resurrected and have eternal life. They are the ones who see Jesus and believe in Him (v. 40). Seeing and believing are necessary human responses in order for one to receive eternal life and be resurrected.

According to Hull, there are two types of sight: physical and spiritual. Physical sight includes the visible, tangible things while spiritual sight includes the invisible, intangible things. Two people may physically see the same thing but respond differently because they have different perceptions and perspectives. People's perspectives influence their responses to Christ (Hull 276). Jesus performed miracles which people could interpret as signs revealing Jesus' identity or as strange phenomenon. The Jews saw Jesus and knew some of his physical background (v. 41-42). However, they did not accept Jesus because he was not like the leader they expected God would send (Hull 276). Gail O'Day notes that though they knew Jesus' physical origins they were blinded to his true spiritual origins because of their misconceptions (603-604). They relied on their own human efforts which are always insufficient; God must be included in the equation (Harrison 1087). Meanwhile, others interpreted the physical signs to spiritually see that Jesus was the Messiah, and they were drawn to God and believed (Hull 276).

A predestinarian explanation is that the reason some people have spiritual sight and others are spiritually blind is because they are predestined to see or not see. People cannot see the spiritual truth unless God reveals that truth to them. God reveals the truth to the elect who then respond positively because they are predestined to do so.

Free will theists suggest that people are able to see spiritually because they want to see. As in the argument concerning verse 37, willingness and calling are interrelated. God responds to their openness by enabling them to see spiritually (Hull 275) which could be considered as God giving them to Jesus or as Jesus not casting out those who come (v. 37). A free will theist would state that this theology agrees with Hebrew 12:2 which names Jesus as the author and finisher, or "pioneer and perfecter," of people's faith. Jesus physically came with an offer (pioneer). Jesus enables the people to see, and Jesus does not cast out the willing people (perfecter).

Verses 44 and 45 receive a lot of attention from theologians. A common theme in John concerning salvation is that there are two parts: divine initiative and human response. As mentioned earlier, human effort alone is not enough for a person to receive salvation.

The person must be "drawn" by God. When one "draws" someone or something, the person is bringing that someone or something closer because (s)he loves that person or thing (Brown 271). When God draws someone, God is moving in that person's heart to incline that person to come closer to God (271). God made the initial effort by sending Jesus. Jesus performed miracles and gave speeches. Through these acts, Jesus revealed his identity and mission. When people were given the opportunity to know the truth, they had to respond to it. The relevant issue, then, concerns the extent of God's offer of salvation and whether people choose their responses.

The predestinarian argument is that God draws some and not others (Wright 159). God draws those who have been elected since before time, and they come to Jesus (131). The non-elect are not drawn and do not even try to come to Jesus. Invitations for salvation are simply opportunities "for the elect sheep to be distinguished from the nonelect goats" (163-164). When God teaches people who Jesus is, the elect listen and learn the truth while others murmur and complain (vv. 41, 45).

Free will theists counter the predestinarian view that people have faith because they are predestined to be drawn to it. Rudolf Bultmann describes God's "drawing" as not being "behind man's decision of faith, but in it" (Bultmann 232). Brown concurs and explains that in order for people to be drawn by God, they need to be open to God. If people will listen, then God will teach and draw them. As people see what God is doing and take chances with faith, God rewards their faith through drawing and equipping them to believe and receive eternal life (Brown 277).

Another free will theist, Everett F. Harrison, proposes that people need to be taught who Jesus is, and as they are taught, God draws them to Jesus (1087). Verse 45 states that "all will be taught by God." O'Day believes this "all" means "God's will for human salvation is inclusive in intent, not exclusive" (602). Salvation is offered to all, but "only those who hear and learn what God teaches will come." She adds that "learning" is a metaphor for "human receptivity." The more receptive people are, the more they learn and are drawn (O'Day 603-604). Hull presents a similar argument. He states that God draws and teaches people, giving them "opportunity" to hear and learn. People can choose to accept or reject this opportunity (276). The basic concept is that God gives opportunity. If people open themselves to God and listen, God moves in their hearts to lead them to believe. People have free will. They can freely decide to be open to God, and in their openness, they will be drawn.

Predestinarians explain this verse by referring to previous arguments concerning John 6. The "all" is the same "all" from verse

37. The elect will be willing to be taught because of their predestined inclination towards spiritual matters. Just as in verses 41 and 44, the non-elect will not be interested in being taught and will therefore not be taught.

The overall perspective of this passage is that God allows people to physically see and hear teachings of Jesus. God sent Jesus to initiate relationships with people, and people are confronted with a decision. Some people listen and learn about Jesus; others refuse. Those who listen are given spiritual insight and see the truth of Jesus' teachings, while those who do not listen remain ignorant. Those who listen come to Jesus, are not cast out, will have eternal life, and will be resurrected.

Most predestination interpretations of John 6:37-45 argue that God elected who would listen and who would remain ignorant before the world was created. People cannot deviate from their predetermined grouping. Free will theists tend to summarize this passage by admitting that God may have always known who would choose to hear and who would choose not to hear (though not all free will theists believe God had this knowledge). However, the main point they stress is that each individual chooses freely for him/herself whether to accept or reject God's invitation.

Textual analysis indicates that verse 37 seems slightly more supportive of predestination because the phrase "will come" followed by "lose nothing" implies a certainty which is more indicative of predestination than free will. However, the predestination viewpoint diminishes the relational attribute of God while free will theism can explain this verse while maintaining the important theological point that God is relational. The subsequent verses do not seem to have a strong inclination toward either the predestination or free will perspectives. Both sides are able to make a case for their viewpoints.

When weighing these two perspectives, the deciding factor does not seem to be in the textual arguments but in one's view of God. The predestination argument presents God as less relational but more in control. Free will theism describes God as more relational but less all-powerful. These theologies are not limited to John 6 but are a main part of the predestination-free will debate in general. Therefore, John 6:37-45 can be interpreted from either perspective with seemingly equal weight. The determining factor in one's interpretation of this passage appears to be one's fundamental theological presuppositions which are hopefully founded on the overall message of the Bible.

## **VI. Romans 8:28-33**

" We know that in everything God works for good  
with those who love him, who are called according

to his purpose. [For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies."

Because this passage has several words related to predestination, it is frequently used by predestinarians to support their position. However, free will theists cannot ignore the passage without weakening their position. They need to explain at least to some degree how this passage does not prove their position wrong. Free will theists challenge this passage's apparent predestinarian tilt through offering different definitions for terms typically used in predestinarian theology. Debate concerning this passage also involves interpretations of prepositional phrases which describe how, why, and for whom everything works.

Verse 28 has four related parts: God's working, people's love, people's calling, and God's purpose. As in John, these parts involve divine and human actions. God works, calls, and has a purpose. People are to love God. The first part of verse 28 is God working for good which is followed by "with those." The rest of the verse describes "those" in two ways. "Those" are people who love God and are called according to God's purpose.

The first description for "those" is people who love God. Concerning predestination and free will, the issue is whether people freely choose or are predestined to love God. A predestinarian explanation is that God called certain people to love God. Those who love God do so because they are called or predestined. A free will interpretation of the relationship is that God loves everybody, and people choose how they will respond to this love. Some people respond by loving God. These people are called, and God uses their willingness to accomplish God's purposes. Free will theists also question the validity of the predestinarian position that people can be predestined to love God. According to free will theists, for love to be genuine, it must be free; it cannot be forced. Because predestination theology does not allow for free choice, human love for God cannot be genuine in a predestinarian system, and therefore, predestination theology is not genuine.

The second description of "those" deals with God's calling. Knox defines "calling" as an "invitation" or a "summons" (Knox 527). James D. G. Dunn notes that a calling is a "setting apart." This "setting apart" is not between Jews and Gentiles or clergy and laity. It is a separation between "those having the Spirit" and those having "the mind-set of the flesh" (Dunn in Word 494). In the Old Testament, the Israelites were considered to be set apart by God, but in the New Testament, Gentiles are included so that the calling was not based on ethnic group affiliation (494). Dunn states that "this divine initiative [which included Gentiles] is no sudden decision by God" (494). The calling is extended to the Gentiles, not because the Jews rejected Christ and are therefore unworthy, but because the universal nature of the call "was all part of God's purpose from the first" (495). According to both Dunn and Knox, "calling" is part of a pre-creation plan that invites or draws people and separates them, not by physical circumstances, but by spiritual criteria.

Another aspect of being "called" concerns the matter of who are included among the elect. The last phrase of verse 28 is "according to his purpose." Verse 29 presents God's predestined plan that the foreknown and predestined are "to be conformed to the image of his Son" that there be "many brethren." The word "many" does not mean the same as "all," implying that in God's foreknown and predestined plan, not everyone receives salvation. This wording then refutes the idea that everyone will receive salvation, but it does not refute the idea that everyone will have the opportunity for salvation. Verses 29 and 30 use several key words including "foreknew," "predestined," "called," "justified," and "glorified." In these verses, these words are interrelated. A large part of the predestination/free will debate is based on how one relates the terms "foreknowledge" and "predestination." The grammatical tense of these verses is that of a "completed action" which Dunn concludes is indicative of the certainty of God's purpose being fulfilled (Dunn in Word 495). However, verse 28 contains the word "might" which allows for some question concerning certainty.

The overall past verb tense of these verses seems to favor a predestination interpretation of this passage. Because God's purpose will be accomplished, and the verse is written as though God's purpose has already been accomplished, predestinarians conclude that God has predestined what is to happen. Part of God's purpose deals with salvation. If God's purpose in salvation cannot be thwarted, God must have foreknown and predestined those who would be called. R. K. McGregor Wright describes foreknowledge and predestination as "coextensive" which means that he believes that there is a group of people God foreknew and predestined to accept Christ. One action did

not follow or cause the other, but they were simultaneous actions (Wright 139). Following Wright's reasoning that foreknowledge and predestination occurred simultaneously because of the connecting word "also," one could conclude that the calling, justification, and glorification occurred at that moment too because each of these words are in the past tense and connected with "also." Dan O. Via affirms this logic by stating that "God's redemptive intention is always there ahead of us," and "the eternal purpose of God becomes concrete historical reality in calling and justification, which have already happened" (Via 1151). Glorification is then something which has already occurred according to God's eternal plan but will not occur in the temporal world until the resurrection (1151).

The verb tense presents a challenge to free will theists. The idea of free will seems to be in conflict with the certainty that God's purposes will be accomplished which is suggested by the past tense of the passage. The challenge is that if God's will is sure to occur, then people cannot have free will because free will means that people can do things contrary to God's desires or plans. Free will theists respond to this challenge in different ways. Some theologians, such as Clark Pinnock, state that people have free will in some areas but not others. In the areas where God gives control to people, God cannot ensure that His will will occur, but God will take actions to influence people's decisions. Pinnock states that people are "not in a position to thwart God's will for the whole world, but they [are] able to reject it effectively in their own case" (Pinnock in Basinger and Basinger 58). Bruce Reichenbach states that God voluntarily gives up some power for human freedom, but in some cases God may restrict human freedom to accomplish certain goals. However, these restrictions "cannot be condoned without just cause or good reason. And interference which would totally remove morally significant freedom, the freedom to make our own moral choices, is completely dehumanizing and unacceptable" (Reichenbach in Basinger and Basinger 109). Reichenbach also states that God can accomplish things through nature and some degree of persuasion (117). Therefore, the past tense of Romans 8:29-30 does not disprove free will theism because God can work through nature and influence to ensure that ultimate, general goals will occur even if specific goals for individuals are not met due to the individual's free will.

Another free will response to the challenge is to redefine the terms. Dale Moody explains foreknowledge by focusing on the relationship between the biblical use of "know" and intimate relationship. God's foreknowledge is God's loving a person before that person loves God. Foreknowledge is not related to specific persons being predestined for heaven or hell but to the intimate relationship initiated by



God (Moody 221). Moody describes predestination by comparing it to air travel. A plane is predestined to land at a certain location just as Jesus is predestined for heaven. People choose to get on the plane because they want to go to that destination. A person chooses to accept Jesus because (s)he wants to go to heaven; the person "believes and continues to believe in Jesus Christ" (Moody 222). Moody's interpretation of verses 29 and 30 seems to be that God has always loved people (foreknowledge) and planned a way for them to go to heaven (predestination). God invites them to go (calling), and those who go are justified and glorified.

There are two assumptions in Moody's plane metaphor that need to be considered. One is the certainty that a plane scheduled to go to a particular location will actually arrive at that location. Planes do not always arrive at the airports where they are originally scheduled to arrive. There are accidents and re-routings that occur. This situation weakens the metaphor because, as Moody states, Jesus "was predestined for glory," and nothing can thwart that destiny (Moody 222). The other assumption deals with the certainty that a person on the plane will arrive at that location too. A person could parachute from the plane which in spiritual terms would be like apostasy. This assumption strengthens Moody's argument because the possibility of apostasy does not contradict free will. If a person can choose to accept Jesus, then the person can choose to later reject Jesus and leave the faith.

Verse 32 contains the phrase "gave him up for us all." When interpreting this verse as it relates to election, one needs to consider to whom "us all" refers. The free will argument is that "us all" means "everyone," and therefore, the phrase declares that Jesus was given for salvation to be available for everyone. This definition of "us all" does not coincide with a predestination interpretation. According to predestinarians, if someone does not believe, that person was predestined to not believe in Jesus. Jesus was not given for that person, but "us all" refers only to those predestined for salvation. Another possibility is that Paul is referring to the Christians in Rome to whom he writes (Wright 124). Some predestinarians believe "us all" means "everyone" because everyone is predestined to receive salvation. However, in verse 29, the use of "many" refutes this interpretation that all will receive salvation.

Before the world's creation, God had a purpose and a plan. God initiated a relationship with people by loving them. God calls people to follow His intention, and those who follow God will be justified and glorified. The debate concerns whether or not all people have the opportunity to accept God's intentions and whether or not all those given the opportunity accept or reject Christ. The way people respond

to these questions leads to other questions dealing with God's control and the certainty of God's purposes coming to fruition.

At first glance, this text in Romans seems to support a predestinarian view because such a view does not have to redefine words and phrases but can maintain the typical meanings. Also, the use of the past tense in God's calling, justifying, and glorifying suggests a degree of certainty regarding the temporal future. Predestination theology offers a higher degree of certainty because God would not be dependent on fallible humans. However, the use of "all" in verse 32 challenges predestinarians to redefine "all" to mean something other than "everybody." A major strength for the predestinarian argument regarding this passage lies in the past verb tense which implies certainty. However, free will theists have given several interpretations which do not require a change in tense. At the same time, these interpretations allow for certainty regarding God's predestined will while simultaneously affirming free human choice.

## VII. Ephesians 1: 3-14

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. [He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us. For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In him, according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will, we who first hoped in Christ have been destined and appointed to live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."

Ephesians 1 is a eulogy which introduces and summarizes the

themes for the book of Ephesians (Lincoln 42). Because this passage contains a lot of predestination vocabulary, R. K. McGregor Wright describes this chapter as a "foundation" for the concept of "irresistible grace" discussed in the following chapter (Wright 134). There are several phrases which are repeated throughout this section. God "destined," "chose," and "appointed" people (vv. 4, 5, 12). The phrase "according to" provides guidelines God used for these actions. (vv. 5, 7, 9-11). Additionally, the themes of divine mystery, love, and foreknowledge are found in Ephesians 1.

This passage provides a list of God's actions. These actions were done according to God's purposes, riches, and counsels. Since verse seven speaks of the "riches" of God's grace, a free will theist would argue that God's riches and therefore God's grace are limitless. Thus, God's grace is not limited to a select few but is available to everyone.

Predestinarians argue that grace is by definition undeserved. No one can do anything to deserve salvation, which makes God's gift of salvation for the elect rich in grace. Predestinarians see at least three problems with free will theism concerning grace. Offering salvation to everyone would "cheapen" grace. First, according to predestinarians, in free will theism, people must choose to receive salvation. Because humans must do something, salvation is dependent on them and no longer a gracious gift. Second, if everyone can have salvation, it is less special. Free will theists counter that the gift is special because of the giver, not the receiver. Third, if everyone can be saved, people will take the gift for granted or believe they deserve it, thus eliminating grace.

In several verses, all things are said to be accomplished according to God's counsel, purpose, or will (v. 5, 9-11). God's purpose is described as "set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (vv. 9-10). PHEME PERKINS states that according to Old Testament thought and probably in the minds of the Ephesians, "all things" had a "cosmic" scope; it included everything in the universe. The connotation for verse 10 would then be that there is no limit beyond which Jesus' plan does not extend (Perkins 376-377). The free will interpretation of "all things" is that salvation and redemption extend to everyone. God's will is to offer salvation to everyone because the extent of God's plan is broad enough that everyone can have the opportunity.

Predestinarians have several options in dealing with the phrase "all things." They can take a universalist approach and state that everyone is predestined to receive salvation. After all, this passage in Ephesians only mentions the positive aspects of salvation but does not refer to consequences of not following Christ (Lincoln 24).

Predestinarians could also argue that just as God has a predetermined plan for every aspect of the universe, God has a predetermined plan for each individual. God's plans for the individual are part of the larger plan for "all things" which work together as set forth in Romans 8:28. Verse four states that God "chose us in him before the foundation of the world." Predestinarians use this verse as a proof text for their theology. Andrew T. Lincoln interprets this phrase from verse four to mean that God's choice is not dependent on "temporal" things (Lincoln 23). He states that this phrase does not support the idea of an actual preexistent church, but one may conclude that "the choice of the Church," or the "ideal" church preexisted (Lincoln 23-24). Because the elect were chosen before the world's foundation, and they were not tangibly in existence, they were chosen before they could make a free choice to accept or reject Christ. Each person's destiny was decided before the beginning of the temporal world, and when someone makes a decision, that decision is based on the predetermined plan.

Free will theists interpret verse four differently. One free will standpoint is that before creation God knew who would freely accept or reject Christ. Based on this foreknowledge, God chose the elect (Browning 138). Some predestinarians consider this standpoint invalid because foreknowledge and predestination are the same, or at least interrelated. If God knows what people will choose before they choose, their choice is no longer free (Wright 139). Another free will stance is the choice God made "before the foundation of the world" was for there to be a church, but in this decision, God did not specify which individuals would be a part of this church.

Verse five explains how people are destined. God "destined us in love." Love was a guiding factor in God's selection of the elect. Markus Barth explains that "love" in this passage refers to a "reciprocal attitude of both covenant partners and also of human partners toward one another" (Barth 80). Barth came to this conclusion by comparing parallel statements in the Old Testament and Ephesians (80). The reciprocal attitude of love implies a relationship. Lincoln explains that God desires an "intimate relationship" with people. He points out that verse five states that believers are "destined" to be adopted as sons and daughters of God which implies a relationship so close that the adoptees are transformed to be more like Christ (Lincoln 42).

Free will theist John Sanders explains his view of a relational God. In his opinion, God "desires a relationship of love but love cannot be forced" (Sanders 243). Sanders considers predestination theology to be supportive of the idea that people are God's puppets, and God manipulates people. Sanders concludes that this type of God is not a loving, relational God. Love allows for choice and free will (246).

Because God "destined in love," God destined people to have a choice in the salvation relationship.

Predestinarians may concur that God is relational and desires close relationships with believers. However, they conclude that God predestined some people for salvation and a personal relationship but did not predestine others for reasons defined by God's purposes (v.5). People may question the justness of a God who allows some people to receive salvation while denying it to others. Predestinarians justify God's goodness by stating that no one is worthy of the relationship (Romans 3:23), and therefore, God is not obligated to give anyone salvation. The offer of salvation is "provoked not by historical contingency or human merit, but solely by God's sovereign grace" (Lincoln 23). The fact that God offers salvation to the elect shows God's love. Those who are not chosen for salvation have no justification for complaint because they are receiving what they deserve.

One problem with this theology is that although God's offer of salvation is represented as a display of love, one basic attribute of love is that it cannot be forced. 1 Corinthians 13:5 states "Love does not insist on its own way." When love is forced, it ceases to be love. As stated earlier, a relationship of love needs to be "reciprocal" to be genuine (Barth 80).

Another phrase in Ephesians 1:3-14 that deserves attention in light of our discussion is in verse nine. This verse mentions wisdom, insight, and mystery being made known. Andrew T. Lincoln calls attention to the fact that there were several mystery religions or cult groups around the time this letter was written (Lincoln 31). Ralph P. Martin specifically mentions the gnostics and the false teachers. The gnostics protected their secret knowledge from non-members, and the false teachers preached that divine knowledge was only available to some (Martin in Broadman 136). Lincoln notes that believers were to give thanks to God for the revelation of wisdom and insights while openly proclaiming this knowledge to others (31). They were not to be like the false teachers and gnostics by acting as though they were privileged to have a secret or special knowledge unavailable to others.

Free will theists can use this explanation to build their case for free will. Martin mentions that false teachers were claiming that divine knowledge was only for some. If divine knowledge is not only for some, then it must either be for everyone or for no one. Because verse nine states that divine insight has been made known, wisdom is at least available for some, and must therefore be available to everyone. The problem with this logic is the assumption that what made the teachers false was their statement that knowledge was only available to some. The falsehood in the teachers' explanation of wisdom could have been found in their criteria for who receives special knowledge or

in other areas of their teachings instead of the idea that knowledge is limited to a select few.

Another aspect of "mystery" involves the future. Ephesians has indications of some apocalyptic influences, and "mystery" can refer to events that will not come to pass until the end times. According to Lincoln, the events are known in heaven and can therefore be revealed to people in the present. This revelation of eschatological events could be what is meant by the "wisdom and insight" of verse nine (Lincoln 30).

Perkins explains that the mystery is Jesus. After Jesus came to earth, God's plan for the salvation of the world was revealed and was no longer a mystery. The earthly life of Jesus is the "wisdom and insight" which was made known. He also states that the mystery has some future implications concerning the Jews being included in salvation though they rejected Christ (Perkins 374).

Predestinarians can use Lincoln's and Perkins' ideas that mystery refers to the future. God has already planned what is to happen, and God can reveal the temporal future to people in the temporal present because of the predetermined plan. God's predestined plan is a mystery with parts that have been revealed. The elect receive revelation of who Jesus is, but to the non-elect, the truth remains a mystery. This line of thinking also applies to Perkins' explanation of Jesus being the mystery. People saw Jesus but did not recognize him as the Messiah. Jesus' identity was a mystery except for the elect. God gave "wisdom and insight" to the elect so they would recognize Jesus. This idea is similar to those found in Mark such as when Jesus feeds the multitude and walks on water while the disciples do not understand (Mark 6).

Verse 13 includes the word "sealed." It also specifies the requirements or prerequisites of being sealed which are hearing and believing. The seal is promised by the Holy Spirit and represents a certainty. Wright gives a predestinarian viewpoint as he describes the seal as an irresistible "pledge" that the Holy Spirit gives to specific individuals (Wright 135). He also states that the seal implies "ownership being applied to our souls by the Holy Spirit," and this ownership "cannot be erased" (138). The seal is permanent; thus the predestined selection of those who would receive salvation cannot be undone. Although this interpretation makes sense in terms of defining "sealed," it is problematic in that it makes humans seem impersonal like property or objects instead of individuals who have personal relationships with God.

Markus Barth provides some other definitions of being "sealed." One common understanding is that the seal refers to baptism. Some other possibilities are that the seal is a beginning, a foun-

dation, or rebirth. Another definition is that "sealing is the designation, appointment, and equipment of the saints for a public ministry" (Barth 143). Barth also notes that the seal may refer to "eschatological preservation" due to the influence of Jewish teaching at the time (143). Barth explains that the use of "sealed" in chapter one is a preview of the remainder of the letter which elaborates on the spiritual meaning of the seal.

A free will interpretation of these definitions is that the seal is confirmation of free choices people make. The permanence of the seal is the commitment people make with God that lasts for all eternity. On the other hand, a predestinarian standpoint is that the choices and commitments people make in the temporal world are ensured by the seal to be in accordance with God's predestined plan.

Overall, Ephesians 1 contains an explanation of what God has done and will do in the lives of the elect. Before the world was created, God had a purpose. According to this purpose, God chose, destined, and appointed people in love. This love implies a relationship between God and people. Those who enter into this relationship are sealed or secured in their inheritance, and wisdom and insight are given to them.

A predestinarian interpretation of Ephesians 1 is that God organized the details of the plan and so chose the elect before the world's creation. People cannot go against this plan, for the plan is sealed, or permanent. Those who have been chosen since before time will enter into a relationship with God and receive wisdom and insight. Because of the predestination terminology used in this passage, the predestinarian viewpoint is well supported. Also, in verse 13 the concept of a seal is one of security and assurance which aligns closer to the predestination perspective than the free will perspective. However, verse five weakens the argument by calling into question whether God can be loving while not allowing everyone the opportunity to receive salvation.

A free will approach to this passage is that before time, God had the purpose of a church in general. Because God's purpose was to have loving, intimate relationships with people, God offered people the choice to be a part of this church and have a relationship with God. God revealed this opportunity through Jesus, and when people accept the offer, their choice is confirmed by the seal of the Holy Spirit who reveals wisdom and insight to the believers. The free will arguments provide alternative interpretations of predestination terminology. Also, the reciprocal nature of love as being related to God's actions makes free will theism seem to have a stronger, more logical argument. Although predestinarians have a good case due to the terminology of the passage, the free will argument is stronger overall. Free will the-

ism offers explanations for the different terms and phrases while maintaining the relational factor in salvation implied by verse five. Predestination theology has difficulty explaining how there can be a genuine love relationship when only one party of the relationship decides all the details of the relationship, including the very existence of that relationship.

### **VIII. 1 Timothy 2:1-7**

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as ransom for all, the testimony to which was borne at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

1 Timothy 2 is the beginning of a "series of instructions" of proper church conduct (Mounce 93). Verses 1-7 focus on why the church should pray for everybody, not only a select few (Hinson 312). The main word in this section is "all." It is used five times in these seven verses. The use of "all" in verses four and six causes this passage to be a key text used by free will theists in the predestination-free will debate concerning election. Also, in verse four, reference is made to God's desire. The forcefulness, or the amount of control, this desire has is also debated when dealing with election issues.

Free will theists consider "all" to mean "every." They interpret verses 1-2 as instructions for Christians to pray for everyone including the leaders. According to verse four, God wants everyone to receive salvation, and according to verse six, Jesus died for everybody. The word "all" implies some sort of universalism in relation to the extent of God's salvific concern.

Verse four states that God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (v.4). According to free will theism, this verse means that God wants everyone to receive salvation. Logically, if God wants everyone to receive salvation, God would give all people the opportunity to be saved. If God truly gives all people the opportunity to receive salvation, then everyone must have the abili-



ty to accept the offer. Otherwise, the offer is illegitimate. Therefore, God offers salvation to everyone. However, not everyone accepts Jesus. Thus, those who reject Christ must reject Him because of their free choice rather than because they were predestined to do so. Some predestinarians support the interpretation of verse four which states that salvation is for everybody. They argue that salvation is universal; everyone is predestined to receive salvation. The acknowledgment of Christ as Lord and Savior may not come until the last possible moment, but every person will ultimately believe. Free will theists, on the contrary, argue that clearly there are some people who avidly oppose Christ and refuse to have faith in Christ, even in the last moments of their lives. However, because no one but God can know for sure whether or not an individual has accepted salvation, there is no way to prove everyone does not accept it.

Another possible predestination argument is that "all" does not mean "everyone or everything that ever existed or will exist" but means "all kinds" (Wright 170). R. K. McGregor Wright argues this point textually. He notes that in 1 Timothy alone, there are over forty instances in which the word "all" is used in such a way that it does not refer to "every existing example" but means "many" or "all kinds" of existing examples (171). Wright refers to 1 Timothy 2:1 which begins with "First of all." This phrase does not refer to the following section as being the first thing to ever be presented. It does not mean that the following section is the most important of all things either. "First of all" means the following section will be first of many things to be presented because it is "most important for the present" (170). Another example Wright gives is 1 Timothy 6:10 which states "For the love of money is the root of all evils." Not all evil things are a result of a love for money. In this case, "all" refers to "many kinds of evil" (171). Therefore, in 1 Timothy 2:4, when Paul refers to praying for all, Paul is saying that God desires prayers and salvation for "all kinds of people" (171).

According to some interpreters, this predestinarian argument which qualifies "all" as being "all types" is also supported by the historical context of 1 Timothy. Certain Jews and gnostic teachers were promoting the idea of exclusivism. They were teaching that salvation was only for Jews or certain groups of people (Dunn in *New Interpreter's* 797). Some members of the Ephesian church were accepting these ideas and only praying for some people as a result (Mounce 93). When Paul stated that God desires for everyone to receive salvation, Paul was refuting these exclusive ideas (Martin in *Harper* 1238). He was saying that salvation does not depend on race or other human criteria. Paul could reasonably have been encouraging the Ephesians to pray for the salvation of everyone because they had

no way of knowing who was predestined to accept or reject Christ. Only God knows which people are among the elect.

On the other hand, a free will perspective is that Paul could have been reminding the Ephesian churches that salvation is available to everyone, and they should not be praying as if it is only available to a few. William D. Mounce argues that the historical situation supports defining "all" as "everyone" more than "all groups" (Mounce 85). Paul was "in firm opposition" to the sectarian Jews and exclusive gnostics, and "all" as meaning "every" reflects the "force" of Paul's opposing standpoint better than "all groups" (85). Therefore, the historical and textual context of verse four is not necessarily saying that everyone will be saved; nor does it solely promote the idea of free will or disprove predestination.

Free will and predestination arguments similar to those concerning verse four continue in discussions of verse six. Verse six deals with Christ being the "ransom [or atonement] for all." As in arguments of interpreting verse four, the issue mainly revolves around the definition of "all." However, there are supplemental debates.

Predestinarians and free will theists differ in their interpretations of the "scope of the atonement" (Dunn in *New Interpreter's* 798). Free will theists describe atonement being "for all who will" (798). They state that the price Jesus paid was enough for everybody. Predestinarians limit atonement to the elect. Wright, using his interpretation of "all" in verse four, states that the ransom mentioned in verse six is a ransom for "all kinds of people" (Wright 172 emphasis mine). According to Wright, this interpretation aligns with other verses dealing with atonement and ransoms. Wright refers to Matthew 20:28, Isaiah 35:10, and Isaiah 53:11 which use the term "many" or refer to a select group. According to Wright and other predestinarians, Jesus' atoning ransom is not for everybody, but for the elect which includes individuals from many people groups (172). One problem with these examples is that Matthew 20:28 and Isaiah 53:11 use the term "many" while 1 Timothy 2:6 uses "all." However, as discussed earlier, there are several passages in 1 Timothy which use "all" but mean "all kinds."

Another aspect of 1 Timothy 2:1-7 that is worth mentioning is "God's desire" from verse four. Some predestinarians argue that God's desire is the same as God's will which cannot be thwarted. If God wills for all to be saved, then all will be saved. Free will theists respond to this point in several ways. One way is to simply disagree with the assumption that God's desire and God's will are synonymous (Mounce 86). Another way to explain God's desire in relation to God's will is to present the idea of levels, degrees, or types of God's will. James D. G. Dunn describes God as having a "general will." God

actively works toward reaching this goal and ensures certain events will happen (Dunn in *New Interpreter's* 798). God also has a "permissive will" which is God's desire for people to have free choice even if people choose to act against God's will (798). E. Glenn Hinson concurs. He describes God as having an "antecedent will" which is God's desire for the best possible scenario. The best possible scenario is that everyone would choose to act according to God's will and choose salvation. God, according to Hinson, also has "principal wills." God allows people to freely choose to receive or not to receive salvation. God permits people to "be lost" because God values human freedom more than God desires universal salvation (Hinson 313).

Most of the consulted commentaries agree that "all" in verses four and six of 1 Timothy 2 refers to everyone, but there are some points of valid disagreement to this interpretation. Wright's view of "all" referring to groups is supported both textually and historically. Both sides make reasonable arguments which are difficult to dispute. "All" could mean "everybody" which implies everyone is offered and can accept the offer of salvation. Either everyone is predestined to accept the offer, or everyone has the free choice to accept the offer. "All" could mean "all types" which means not everyone can receive salvation because not everyone is predestined to receive it. When weighing these interpretations, one may consider whether or not God would have a reason to send Jesus to die for some of the sinners and not all of them. In 1 Timothy 2:1-7, no reason is given for why Jesus' sacrifice would not be an atonement for everybody, but one needs to consider other passages such as those examined earlier in this paper which describe God's purposes.

## **IX. 2 Peter 3:5-10**

They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago, and an earth formed out of water and by means of water, through which the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist have been stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will

pass away with a loud noise, and the elements  
will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the  
works that are upon it will be burned up.

2 Peter 3 discusses the end times. Some believers were wondering why Jesus had not yet returned. Teachers were saying that Jesus' promise to return was false. This passage refutes these false teachers, and verse nine gives a reason for the apparent delay: God is forbearing. Two reasons are then given for God's forbearance. First, God does not wish "that any souls perish." Second, God wishes "that all should reach repentance" (v.9). The absolute language of "any" and "all" gives a universal tone to God's wishes. For this reason, this verse has been a key text used by free will theists to refute the idea that God predestines or chooses some people to go to heaven and sends others to hell. Some of the main issues of discussion in interpretation of this verse include the definition of forbearance, the qualification of "all" and "any," and the amount of control God's desire has on human situations. In addition to these issues related to verse nine, verse five contains the phrase "deliberately ignore" which leads to a discussion of choice.

Richard J. Bauckham describes God's forbearance as waiting in hope for sinners to repent. Bauckham notes that in the following verse the people are reminded that Jesus' return could happen at any moment. He argues this section to mean that God is waiting for people to repent. However, because people may delay repentance if they believe the end is not near, God informs the people that Jesus' return will be a surprise, and they need to be ready (Bauckham in Harper 1177). Bauckham's interpretation rejects the theory of predestination. It leads to the conclusion that people can choose to delay repentance. Some free will theists argue against predestination with the reasoning that if people were predestined for salvation or rejection, they would have no choice about when they repent. Therefore, they could not delay repentance, and God would not need to remind the people of the imminence of Jesus' return because that information would not help or hinder them in making a decision to repent immediately or later. This logic only works to contradict a predestination theology which states that God not only determines who will receive salvation but also when each elect person will accept or receive that salvation. This logic does not refute a predestinarian theology which supports the idea that although people do not choose whether or not to ultimately accept or reject salvation, the elect can choose when they accept salvation. This latter type of predestinarian theology includes an element of free will to predestination.

Another debated issue involving verse nine is the definition of

"all" or "any." This discussion is similar to the debates covered in previously mentioned passages. Some free will theists consider "any" and "all" as referring to every individual. These free will theists can argue against double predestination by focusing on the word "wish." If God predestines all events in the world, and God really desires for everyone to receive salvation, then God would predestine everybody for salvation. Thus, the result is a theology of universal salvation. Some predestinarians do in fact believe in universal salvation, and this argument is not a refutation of that belief. However, other predestinarians have a worldview and biblical interpretation which states that not everyone goes to heaven. According to free will theism, predestination theology which does not promote universal salvation is inconsistent with the text because God would wish or desire one thing but predestine another.

Predestinarian R. K. McGregor Wright interprets "any" and "all" as referring to the elect. He defends this interpretation by stating that 2 Peter, like 1 Peter, was written to the elect (1 Peter 1:1). His interpretation of the text is that God waits so all the elect will have opportunity and will be saved. Not all the elect were born when this epistle was written, and therefore, God waits for the elect to have the opportunity to be born. As stated in John 6:37, God does not want or allow the elect to perish (Wright 169). This interpretation counters the previous free will argument concerning universal salvation. If "any" and "all" refer only to the elect, then God desires, predestines, and waits for the elect to receive salvation in the proper, predestined time. There are some problems with Wright's reasoning. First, 2 Peter is addressed to those who have received faith which does not include all the elect because some of the elect have not yet been born. Peter could be telling those who have received salvation to witness to others so that they will join the elect. Second, just because the epistle is written to the elect does not mean that God's desire is not for others to join the elect.

According to Wright's analysis, "forbearance" would be defined simply as "waiting." In the Harper Collins Bible Dictionary, Paul J. Achtemeier defines "forbearance" as God's patience, and the purpose of this patience is "to lead to repentance" (Achtemeier 347). In Wright's interpretation, God seems to be waiting for the sake of waiting because if God had not wanted to wait, God would have predestined the elect to repent sooner. On the other hand, according to Achtemeier's definition, more time is necessary for more people to have the opportunity to receive salvation which implies that there is not a set group or number of people who will be saved. This definition is more purposeful and therefore reasonable than Wright's definition.

Another interesting verse from 2 Peter 3 which has theologi-

cal implications concerning predestination is verse five. Verse five uses the phrase "deliberately ignore" as if the people have a choice. Some synonyms for deliberate are "intentional, studied, cool, careful, thoughtful, [and] unhurried" (Morehead 118). Webster's New World Dictionary defines "deliberate" as "carefully thought out...done on purpose" (Neufeldt and Guralnik 364). According to these synonyms, when people deliberately do something, they are freely choosing to do that something. People cannot willingly act if they do not have free will. The idea is self-contradictory.

Verses 5-7 describe God's acts. As mentioned in the previous passages, divine initiative and human response play a part in God's salvific plan. In this case, God's acts of initiation are described in these verses. The human response is expressed as Peter implores the people to not "ignore" the facts (Geisler in Basinger and Basinger 65). Duane F. Watson explains that this verse is a response to some teachers who were making false statements concerning the end times. According to Watson, Peter is saying that the facts clearly reveal the falsehood of these teachings. The only way these teachers can be making these statements and people can be believing them is by "ignoring the facts" (Watson 356). If people are ignoring the facts, then the facts must have been available to them. They must be able to see the facts and understand them properly. They cannot ignore something that is not revealed to them. Therefore, "ignoring" implies choice.

Predestinarians believe that the choice is predetermined. On the other hand, free will theists believe that for a choice to be valid, people must have free will; otherwise, people do not have a choice but only an illusion of choice (Reichenbach in Basinger and Basinger 51). Overall, free will theists have a stronger argument concerning the proper interpretation of 2 Peter 3:5-10 than do predestinarians. Free will theism uses typical meanings of "all" and "any," along with the general sense of words such as "deliberate" and "ignore."

Predestinarians argue that "all" refers to "the elect," but this argument is not well supported by other aspects of this passage such as forbearance and deliberately ignoring facts. Also, this argument consists mostly of explanation instead of defense.

## **X. Conclusion**

Eight passages have been examined in order to determine what the Bible says concerning predestination and free will. Perspectives of different commentators have been presented and critically analyzed. Arguments were compared to see which interpretations were probably most representative of each text's original meaning. Implications of different wording and translation possibilities were considered as well.

In this process, several things concerning the role of predestination and free will in salvation were learned. First of all, the Bible emphasizes that God is the initiator. Deuteronomy 7 declares that God chose and initiated a covenant relationship with Israel, and not because of anything special about Israel. Israel was simply loved by God (Christensen 159). In Joshua 24 the Israelites proclaim their loyalty to God. This decision was based on God's previous interventions in their history (Butler 274). In the New Testament, God offers eternal life through Jesus. God's initiating act in John 3:16 was sending Jesus into the world so people could have eternal life. John 6 discusses God drawing people to Jesus. It also mentions people seeing and believing in Jesus. In John 6, God's initiative can be described as God's "drawing forth" or as Jesus' presence in the world. Romans 8 uses the word "predestined," and Ephesians 1 uses the phrase "before the foundation of the world" (v.4). God's pre-creation actions initiated a plan involving humans before humans had any contact with God. Similarly, 2 Peter 3 implores people to acknowledge God's initiative in creating the universe (v.5-7).

The second point is that God's initiative presents people with a choice. When God offered the covenant to the ancient Hebrews and when God sent Jesus into the world, people were confronted with a decision. Deuteronomy subtly presents the Israelites with a choice in 7:11 with the phrase "be careful to do." Joshua is more direct in 24:15, where Joshua is depicted as telling the people to "choose." In John 3, the choice is between the dark and the light. The other texts examined do not directly mention choice, but choice was implicitly part of the discussion of these verses.

Third, God's initiating actions are for a purpose. Several passages included phrases which deal with God's reasons and intentions for doing things. John

3:17 states that God sent Jesus into the world for the purpose of saving the world. In John 6, Jesus' job was not to lose but to raise what God had given him. Romans 8 states that God works for good (v.28). According to Ephesians, God destined in love (v.5) and planned to "unite all things" (v.10). 1 Timothy 2:4 states that God's desire is for "everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (New Revised Standard Version). In 2 Peter 3, God's desire is that no one perish and that all repent (v.9). Additionally, according to Ephesians 1:11-14, God's purposes will be accomplished.

The main question people want to know concerning the issue of election is whether salvation is a free choice, predestined, or some mixture of the two, as Dale Moody stresses in his interpretation of Romans 8. Predestinarians say that people make predetermined decisions as a response to God's initiative. Free will theists state that

human choices are free, not predetermined. Some theologians and commentators present ideas which affirm both predestination and free will theologies. The Bible does not explicitly state which of these theologies are true. There are passages which lean toward a predestination viewpoint and passages which lean toward free will theism. Arguments for different perspectives can be made in relation to every text examined.

In weighing the arguments concerning each passage, one can make an educated decision as to which theology has stronger biblical support. As mentioned earlier, the selection of texts which were examined in this paper is not an exhaustive list of relevant texts concerning election. At the same time, interpretations of these texts are representative of the broader debate and its numerous positions. One can make a tentative conclusion based on present research while remaining open to new perspectives and understandings as other texts are studied. The two Old Testament passages examined appear to offer greater support to free will theism than predestinarian theology. Deuteronomy 7:6-11 supports free will theism because Israel was chosen to have a special relationship with God which was not just limited to them. Through Israel, all the nations were to be blessed (Genesis 26:4). Additionally, free will theism has a firmer stand in interpretations of obedience and the necessity of being careful to do as God commands. Predestination interpretations of Joshua 24:14-24 seem to imply the illusion of choice, but Joshua's list of options and consequences followed by the Israelites' accepting responsibility leans toward free will theism. Similarly, in the New Testament passage 2 Peter 3:5, the phrase "deliberately ignore" implies choice in a way that is difficult for predestinarians to explain.

In the representative passages from John, Romans, and Ephesians, predestinarians have good arguments, but free will theism provides a more comprehensive interpretation. The free will interpretation of John 3:16-21 seems to focus on the context of the scripture and has a sound basis in the major modern Bible translations. In John 6:35-44 and Ephesians 1:3-14, the predestination argument presents God as less relational but more in control, while free will theism describes God as more relational but less all-powerful. In Romans 8:38-44 and Ephesians 1:3-14, predestinarian theology does not require definition changes. However, despite these arguments for predestination, free will theism offers counter-explanations for the different terms and phrases we have discussed, gives interpretations which incorporate the idea that God is ultimately able to achieve His purposes, fits with the verb tense in texts such as Ephesians 1, and maintains the relational factor in salvation implied by Ephesians 1:5. Predestination theology has difficulty explaining how there can be a genuine love relation-



ship when only one party decides all the details.

In each New Testament passage, inclusive terms such as "world," "all," and "every" were used. Predestinarians define these terms as referring to "the elect" or "each kind." However, most of the consulted commentaries agree that these terms refer to everyone, and this definition seems more indicative of the extent of God's desires and Jesus' sacrifice. Free will theism uses typical meanings of these terms which gives it the stronger position.

After weighing the arguments, I believe free will theism has a stronger biblical foundation. Predestination makes God's actions seem mechanical and appears to give humans the illusion of choice instead of genuine choice. In Joshua, Joshua tells the people to choose, but the choice does not really exist if they are predestined because they cannot choose differently than was predetermined by God.

Predestinarian theology also treats one's relationship with God as one-sided because only God chooses who is involved in that relationship. The texts we have examined stress that humans have choice. Free will theism allows God to be relational and in control of the ultimate direction of history while also providing people with genuine choice.

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## THE PORTRAYAL OF ADOLF HITLER

CHARLIE WRIGHT

National Socialism began as a small group and many people thought that it would never become prominent. "Adolf Hitler caused a laughed-at and derided small sect to become the most imposing mass movement in Europe."<sup>1</sup> Many people wonder how Hitler, a man with such a violent and twisted world-view, became such a popular figure in Germany. Hitler had no real prior experience in government before he ascended to the office of Chancellor so why did people choose to follow him? How could this man have gained and maintained such a mass following? Hitler gained and maintained his mass support in part through the Hitler Myth. Ian Kershaw defined the Hitler Myth as "a heroic image and popular conception of Hitler imputing to him characteristics and motives at crass variance with reality."<sup>2</sup> This research paper seeks to examine several elements of the Hitler Myth in order to help the reader understand why the German people supported Adolf Hitler.

Hitler portrayed himself and was portrayed as a father figure. The ideal father is kind, gentle, and approachable, and will administer punishment if needed. Adolf Hitler wanted himself to be seen as a father figure. One incident that clearly displays Hitler's paternalism is when Hitler was preparing to address a large body of Nazi supporters in Traunstein. Masses of people were cheering and were anxious to hear their Fuhrer speak. Just as Hitler was about to speak to the masses, an SA official informed him that a loyal supporter was in a nearby hospital, lying on his deathbed, Hitler immediately went to the hospital and sat by the dying man's side for about half an hour.<sup>3</sup> It appeared as though Hitler, in an unselfish act of kindness, sacrificed his valuable time to be with one individual supporter. This is what a good father would do, and this is what Hitler did. Acts like these were calculated and politically motivated, but the Fuhrer did not let the German people

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest K Bramsted, *Goebbels and National Socialist Propaganda* (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1965), 201.

<sup>2</sup> Ian Kershaw, *The Hitler Myth* (London: Oxford University Press, 1987), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Bramsted, 205.

know this. Joseph Goebbels made absolutely sure to report incidents like these in order to show people Hitler's kindness. Such actions went a very long way in assisting the building up of the Hitler Myth, which in turn allowed him to gain and maintain a mass base of support.

Hitler was also portrayed as a father figure after the Rohm Purge (Night of The Long Knives) in June, 1934. Hitler needed the support of the army so he thought that it was necessary to deal with the SA because they had become too overzealous. Hitler had Rohm and many other SA officials killed. Some were brutally murdered. It would seem as if an incident such as this would be looked upon as ruthless, heinous, and cruel; it was not viewed in this light. Hitler and his Propaganda Ministry craftily explained this incident. Kershaw says, "There was great admiration for what was seen to be Hitler's protection of the little man against the outrageous abuses of power of the overbearing SA leadership."<sup>4</sup> Hitler, much like a father, was protecting his children, which were the German people. Hitler also, "...made much of the depraved morals of Rohm and the other SA leaders who were shot."<sup>5</sup> He indeed focused on the fact that he wanted to rid the SA of homosexuals such as Rohm. Hitler also pointed to the SA's use of money for things such as limousines, and needless banquets.<sup>6</sup> This may seem a bit hypocritical on Hitler's part because from the beginning of the Nazi movement some of his highest-ranking officials were homosexuals or people who were considered to be morally corrupt. Why would Hitler make such a big deal of loose morals now? He did because he wanted to use the SA's immorality to his advantage. The day after the Rohm Purge, Goebbels had a photograph printed of Hitler in which, "...his face reflected grief and sorrow over the deaths of his old comrades who had been misled."<sup>7</sup> Hitler portrayed himself as a father figure after the purge of the SA. He was seen as an administrator of righteous punishment who would bring corrupt institutions in line. For many leaders, a purge of any group would certainly be political suicide, but this instance furthered the Hitler Myth, and Hitler remained popular.

Another important element in the Hitler Myth was Hitler as a peacemaker. Hitler attempted to look as if he were a peacemaker. In the early stages of the Nazi regime, Hitler did not want to seem too

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<sup>4</sup> Kershaw, Hitler, 520.

<sup>5</sup> William Shirer, The Rise And Fall Of The Third Reich (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1950), 312.

<sup>6</sup> Kershaw, Hitler, 520-521.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony Rhodes, Propaganda: The Art of Persuasion (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1976), 318.

radical because the German people probably would not have been receptive to Hitler's underlying intentions.<sup>8</sup> The German people still had their defeat in World War I fresh in their minds and most of them did not want another long, bloody struggle. Hitler knew all along that his plans for achieving Lebensraum (living space) would most certainly mean war. Nations such as France and Great Britain were still uneasy in regard to the German nation. Adolf Hitler saw an opportunity to gain other nations' favor and gain more support from the German public. One can see this demonstrated in Hitler's Peace Speech (Friedensrede). Hitler spoke with great emotion and contempt for war. He said:

It is in the interests of all that present-day problems should be solved in a reasonable peaceful manner....The application of violence of any kind in Europe could have no favorable effect upon the political and economic position....The outbreak of such unlimited madness would necessarily cause the collapse of the present social and political order...<sup>9</sup>

Hitler also emphasized the point that all the German people ever wanted was to be a great nation again. Germans wanted to have the same rights as the British, French, and Americans. This does not sound like the anti-Semitic, warlord Hitler to whom people often refer. Hitler accomplished two objectives with Friedensrede. First, he surprised the world with his talk of peace and he may have gained more understanding for the German point of view. Second, he gained more support from the German people with talk of making Germany equal to the other powers. Friedensrede was masterfully worded and it instilled hope in the downtrodden German citizens.

Another example of Hitler's self-portrayal as a peacemaker came in the form of a speech as well. In the 1930s Hitler stated that Germany was prepared to disarm as long as the other nations would do the same. Hitler knew that France would never agree to such an ambitious policy because the French still severely mistrusted the Germans. The French believed that Germany would one day seek revenge on France for its defeat in World War I. Hitler used France's rejection of disarmament as an opportunity to withdraw from the League of Nations. In a convincing speech presented in October of 1933, Hitler said:

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<sup>8</sup> Holger H Herwig, "The Political Road of a German Admiral," Journal of Contemporary History 9, no. 2 (1974): 109.

<sup>9</sup> Alan Bullock, Hitler: A Study in Tyranny (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962), 322.



For a decade and a half the German people hoped for a time when at last the end of the war should also become the end of hate and enmity. But the aim of the Treaty of Versailles seems not to be to give peace to humanity at last, but rather to keep humanity in a state of everlasting hatred.<sup>10</sup>

Hitler made a very good point so it seemed. He skillfully turned the situation around and made it appear as though Germany was the victim while other nations were the aggressors. Hitler also made it appear as though he and the German public wanted nothing but peace. He launched this peace propaganda mainly for diplomatic reasons, but he also wished to gain support at home.

The Hitler Myth contains an element suggestive of Hitler as a religious figure. Hitler portrays himself and was portrayed by the Propaganda Ministry as a religious figure. Hitler sums this up very well in *Mein Kampf* when he makes statements such as, "By defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord."<sup>11</sup> Whether or not Hitler actually believed that Providence guided him is not the major argument at this point. The main point is, that Hitler portrayed himself in a way that people may have actually believed that he was doing the work of God. For example, in the Nazi propaganda film, "The Triumph of the Will," there is a scene in which Hitler is flying in a plane, looking down upon a German city. He descends upon his people in order to meet with them.<sup>12</sup> "Triumph of the Will" definitely had religious overtones. It almost seems to parallel with Jesus Christ's descent from the heavens. The relationship between Hitler and Jesus may be uncertain, but by examining other evidence one can see that the parallel in "Triumph of the Will" may have indeed been intended.

One can clearly see Hitler's use of religious themes in his speech to the Hitler Youth in 1934. Hitler proclaimed, "You are flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood."<sup>13</sup> He had gone even further in 1932 when he told the same organization, "Be hot or cold but lukewarm should be damned and spewed from your mouth."<sup>14</sup> Hitler basically recited a biblical passage in Revelation (3:15-16). One can now come to the understanding that Hitler blatantly attempted to use the

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<sup>10</sup> Bullock, 323.

<sup>11</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* Ralph Manheim, trans. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), 65.

<sup>12</sup> *The Triumph of the Will*, dir. Leni Riefenstahl, 1934.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Waite, *The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 32.

<sup>14</sup> Waite, 32.

Bible in order to align himself with God and Jesus.

Another example of Hitler's portrayal as a religious figure occurred when students in German primary schools wrote a dictation, which read:

Jesus and Hitler. As Jesus freed men from sin and hell, so Hitler freed the German people from destruction. Jesus and Hitler were persecuted, but while Jesus was crucified, Hitler was raised to the Chancellorship....Jesus strove for heaven, Hitler for the German earth.<sup>15</sup>

Jesus had a mission on earth, and the Nazi propaganda machine wanted to make Hitler look as if he too were on a mission. Many German citizens were religious, so Hitler attempted to exploit this by appearing to be a religious figure. He wanted to be viewed in a religious light because this would assist him in maintaining the support of the German people. Bramsted assessed the situation well when he said, "Hitler was presented as the last hope of the masses."<sup>16</sup>

Hitler wanted to be seen as the sole reason for the amazing economic turnaround in Germany in the 1930s. Willy Schumman remembered a narrative in a primary school textbook. The narrative was about an unemployed father who was responsible for several children. The father was so poor that he often could not provide food for his children so the children often cried themselves to sleep. Then Adolf Hitler ascended to power and he oversaw the creation of many jobs. At the end of the story, the father received a job working on the Autobahn and the family recovered. The children and their father lived very happy lives from that point forward.<sup>17</sup> This story depicts Hitler as the hero. It basically gives him full credit for the change in this particular man's family. This is religious in the sense that Hitler had created a political faith. The faith mentioned in the previous paragraph can be defined as pseudo-religious faith. These "faiths" help Hitler to gain and maintain mass support. The interesting thing is that these "faiths" are not centered in God or government as a whole, but they are centered in the person of Adolf Hitler. Hitler and the Propaganda ministry were effective in leading the German people into focusing their beliefs, hearts, souls, and emotions towards Hitler.

Between 1933 and 1935, Hitler did not really flaunt the idea that he was planning on murdering millions of the Jewish community.

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<sup>15</sup> Waite, 31.

<sup>16</sup> Bramsted, 202.

<sup>17</sup> Willy Schumman, Being Present: Growing Up In Hitler's Germany (Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1991), 11-12.

He did persecute a certain group and that group is none other than the Marxists/Communists. Hitler portrayed himself as a bulwark against Marxism. Hitler's anti-Marxist ideology assisted him in gaining popularity because it gave the German people a common enemy.<sup>18</sup> Many Germans feared the idea of having a Marxist regime in control of their country. This violent hatred of Marxism gave the Germans a focus, and a reason to join together in fighting. Hitler portrayed himself as the leader in the fight against Marxism because he knew it would allow the Germans to rally behind something. Hitler believed that he should wage a war against Marxism and punish Marxists for attempting to undermine German society.<sup>19</sup> The German people were very receptive to Hitler's stand against Marxism. Hitler's rhetoric against Marxism appealed to the German public's national pride. This national pride centered around Hitler though, for he was the symbol that the Germans rallied around.

Hitler also portrayed himself as a leader against the Jews. Once again, Hitler was very careful in masking his true intentions for the Jews. From 1933 until 1935 anti-Jewish laws had come into effect but the Germans did not perceive them as overly harsh. Hitler made the Jewish people seem as if they were oppressors. He used this excuse as justification for discriminating against them.<sup>20</sup> Hitler did not want to alienate too many people too quickly. He made the persecution of Jews an incremental process. In the late 1930s and early 1940s Hitler had basically completed the radicalization process but it would have cost him support if he had become too radical in the early 1930s. Hitler began his mission against the Jews for ideological reasons. Hitler truly believed that the Jews were the seed of the devil. Hitler also had another more pragmatic reason for his campaign against the Jews. Hitler had to have an enemy when the Marxists no longer were a threat. Many German people eventually saw the Jews as a common enemy. The Hitler Myth was furthered by Hitler's stance against the Jews; thus, he gained as well as maintained mass support. Hitler portrayed himself and was portrayed as a leader of the masses. This portrayal is made apparent through his speeches at mass meetings. Party rallies or mass meetings were commonplace in Third Reich Germany. Mass meetings were designed for many purposes, but there are two main features which relate to this topic. First, party rallies were held to excite, inspire, and play upon the emotions of the masses. Individualism was not the theme during these exhibitions.

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<sup>18</sup> Kershaw, *The Hitler Myth*.

<sup>19</sup> Herwig, 115.

<sup>20</sup> Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against The Jews 1933-1945* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1975).

Group or community mentality (*gemeinschaft*) was the desired goal. Second, party rallies were held to evoke awe in those who were not in attendance. The Nazi Propaganda Machine, Propaganda, and "The Triumph of the Will" gave historians good examples of the general mood at these rallies. Each of these sources contained examples that allow people to see what the rallies were actually like. At party rallies, a major theme was organization. Each individual was in his or her proper place. The most important feature at Nazi party rallies was that they all centered on the person of Hitler. Hitler usually gave a speech at the end of each mass meeting. Many people's senses became overwhelmed when the Fuhrer spoke. William Shirer attended meetings in Nuremberg on September 4 and September 5, 1934. On September 4, Shirer recorded:

Like a Roman emperor, Hitler rode into this medieval town....they looked up at him as if he were a Messiah, their faces transformed into something positively inhuman....If he had remained in sight for a few moments more, I think many of the women would have swooned from excitement.<sup>21</sup>

On September 5 the religious feeling of the meeting impressed Shirer. Hitler made a grandiose entrance. Thirty thousand people became utterly silent as the "Badenweiler March" was played. As Hitler appeared the crowd erupted.<sup>22</sup> Hitler portrayed himself as sole ruler of the masses. The people were held spellbound by his emotional and often dramatic speeches. The crowd obeyed their Fuhrer's every word. Hitler indeed maintained his support through these rallies. People reaffirmed their belief in Hitler because the group as a whole influenced them.

Hitler portrayed himself and was portrayed as a national symbol. Willy Schumann went to school in Germany. He said that he distinctly remembered a picture that hung on the wall of his primary school classroom. This picture showed the heads of four prominent figures in German history: Frederick I (Barbarossa), Frederick II (the Great), Bismarck, and Adolf Hitler.<sup>23</sup> This image is important because it shows that Hitler wanted people to associate him with German leaders which people looked to with great respect. Hitler and the Propaganda Ministry wanted the Germans to remember that Germany had once been a great nation as the first three pictures revealed. Then they wanted people to look at the picture of Adolf Hitler and realize

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<sup>21</sup> William Shirer, *Berlin Diary* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1943), 16.

<sup>22</sup> Shirer, *Berlin Diary*, 16.

<sup>23</sup> Schumann, 10.

that he would make Germany great again. The idea was to associate Hitler with anything or anyone, who would present him as a national symbol.

Another example of Hitler's attempt to portray himself as a national symbol took place at the traditional veneration of Bismarck. Goebbels made it a point to emphasize the idea that, "Hitler took up Bismarck's work and is about to complete it."<sup>24</sup> There were countless other incidents such as these. Hitler was seen as a national symbol that people could rally behind. Again, the association of Hitler with former German rulers furthered the Hitler Myth.

Goebbels and Nazi propagandists exploited Hitler's personal habits. Goebbels wanted to offer the common man a good idea of what the Fuhrer was like. He emphasized Hitler's loyalty to his country and his loyalty to his friends.<sup>25</sup> Goebbels stressed Hitler's simplicity as well. He emphasized Hitler's simple uniform, which he had worn when he was a simple soldier. Hitler ate simple meals as well.<sup>26</sup> This type of propaganda portrayed Hitler as a "common man." Hitler was portrayed as many great things, but Goebbels realized that there was a need to make Hitler seem more like a "regular" person. This is an old, but successful trick utilized by today's politicians. People tend to support someone whom they believe is on their level.

German propaganda emphasized the fact that Hitler abstained from alcohol, cigarettes, and meat. This may have been brought to the public eye in order to stress Hitler's self-control. Hitler also abstained from these things because he wanted to stay healthy for his country.

An important point that must be dealt with is German propaganda in general. The Hitler Myth could never have been achieved without good and effective propaganda. Hitler's Propaganda Ministry very skillfully presented elements of the Hitler Myth, which made Hitler appealing to the masses. Hitler contributed very useful ideas of his own on the subject of propaganda. He believed that propaganda must always be geared towards the masses, whose emotions he sought to manipulate. He believed that the larger the crowd, the lower the intellectual level. According to Hitler, repetitive was also very important.<sup>27</sup> He thought that a simple point needed to be made and continuously repeated. Hitler's speeches at party rallies dealt with themes that the masses could identify with: restoring Germany's greatness, cleaning up the pollution of the Jews, destroying Marxism, and extirpating morally corrupt Western societies.<sup>28</sup> Correct usage of propaganda was

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<sup>24</sup> Bramsted, 204.

<sup>25</sup> Bramsted, 204.

<sup>26</sup> Kershaw, *Hitler Myth*, 72.

<sup>27</sup> Hitler, 179-182.

<sup>28</sup> Rhodes, 18.

indeed the reason that the Hitler Myth was so widely accepted.

The Propaganda Ministry was able to achieve its goals in regard to the portrayal of Hitler because they retained unlimited power in key areas. These included the radio, the press, films, theater, writing, plastic arts, foreign intercourse, exhibitions, celebration arrangements, party congresses, educative literature, advertising, and lectures.<sup>29</sup> They were able to bombard an individual or individuals with simple, but memorable images. It would have been extremely difficult for any German to get away from the propaganda. Hitler used the radio very effectively, and Hitler's speeches were announced well in advance. There were loudspeakers located in strategic areas such as streets, factories, restaurants, and recreational facilities.<sup>30</sup> That is just one example of how the Propaganda Ministry was able to achieve its goals.

Hitler may have been successful in portraying himself as many different things because he became a believer in his own myth. Once again, the focus returns to the religious issue. Hitler insisted that the Germans had a "mission" and the Lord's will was for him to lead the Germans to the goal:

What we must fight for is to safeguard the existence and reproduction of our race and our people, the sustenance of our children and the purity of our blood, the freedom and independence of the fatherland, so that our people may mature for the fulfillment of the mission allotted it by the creator of the universe.<sup>31</sup>

This is just one of many instances in which Hitler spoke as if he knew of some special mission that God has planned for him. Hitler, in his own mind thought that he was set apart from the normal human. Hitler also said that Providence would dictate the path that he takes and he has faith that it will lead him in the right direction.<sup>32</sup> Hitler so fervently thought that his myth was true, that he became more and more radical as time passed.

Hitler attempted to portray himself as many different things. Hitler's propaganda ministry portrayed him as a multifaceted individual. Hitler was portrayed as a father figure, a religious figure, a peace-maker, a fighter against Marxism, a fighter against the Jews and the

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<sup>29</sup> Otto Deutsch, Hitler's Twelve Apostles (New York: Books For Libraries Press, 1969), 78.

<sup>30</sup> Ernst Kris and Hans Speier, German Radio Propaganda (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), 126.

<sup>31</sup> Hitler, 214.

<sup>32</sup> Waite, 28.

supreme ruler of the German people. A researcher can pick and choose different elements of the Hitler Myth and study each element individually. On the other hand, an ordinary German person may never have thought that Hitler and his Propaganda Ministry were systematically building up a myth for the purpose of gaining and maintaining mass support. Most Germans would have deserted Hitler if they had truly understood his ideological goals. He used the Hitler Myth as a mask to hide behind. Hitler really was not a peacemaker, a father figure, or a religious figure. He coaxed the German people into believing that he actually personified those things. Hitler was a fighter against Marxism, and a leader against the Jews, but on other issues the Nazis were less than truthful. Hitler had specific ideological goals in mind, and he proved that he was willing to go to any lengths to achieve these goals.

In conclusion, the Hitler Myth and the portrayal of Hitler as embodying many positive ideals were essential to the success of Nazism. The Nazis gained a mass following because they were able to skillfully utilize many different sources of propaganda and techniques for its proper use. Many wonder how anyone could have followed Hitler. However, in the years 1933 until 1935, Hitler was portrayed as a person with many admirable qualities. Kershaw refers to this period as the “normal years” of the Third Reich.<sup>33</sup> By studying the Hitler Myth and Hitler’s self-portrayal, it becomes somewhat easier to see from the perspective of a German person during this period. One must understand that the radicalization process did not happen overnight. Hitler was careful not to alienate too many people at one time. He was also very careful to make the radicalization process a slow and systematic one. Much of the Hitler Myth was in place by 1935 although a few more elements were incorporated later. Hitler was associated with things or people that the Germans could identify with. Bramsted’s summation of the Hitler Myth is, “....the leader has to appear at one and at the same time as a charismatic superman and as a fellow human being. He must be made to seem both distant and near, cunning and simple....”<sup>34</sup> Hitler became a very powerful man through false self-portrayal and propaganda. Hitler portrayed himself as many things that he, in all actuality, was not. Many elements of the Hitler Myth are symbolic, and the researcher may draw many differing conclusions. By examining the early years of the Nazi regime, one can clearly see when the Hitler Myth began to take shape, and how it provided a base of mass support.

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<sup>33</sup> Kershaw, *Hitler*, 529.

<sup>34</sup> Bramsted, 198.

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